
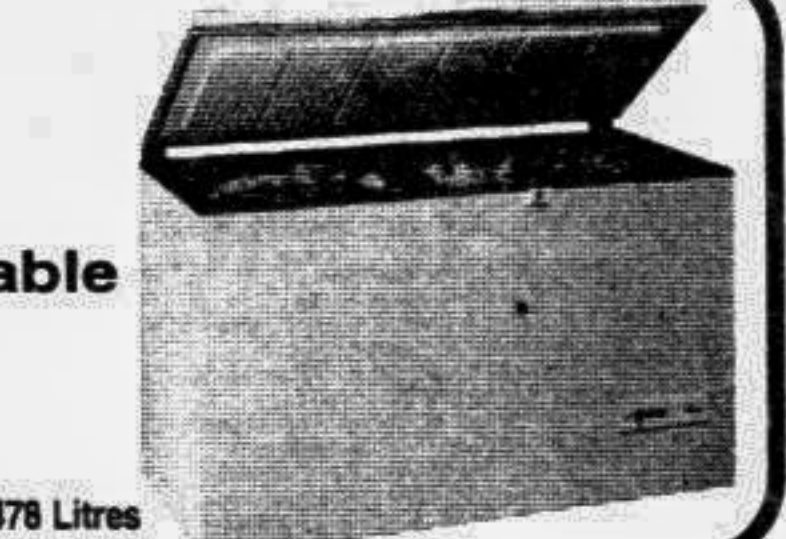


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Moscow blast kills 55

MOSCOW, Sept 13: President Boris Yeltsin ordered increased security across Russia Monday after a bomb in a Moscow block of flats killed 55 people, but the measures fell short of a full-blown state of emergency. Interfax said, reports AFP.

Security will be tightened around nuclear power stations, oil storage facilities, pipelines and other key installations, Yeltsin said at the outset of a meeting with his security chiefs at the Kremlin.

Noting that the latest explosion was the "third terrorist act in a few days" in Moscow, Yeltsin said "the capital needs to be placed under special control," Interfax said.

"We must not tackle the problem on ethnic or religious grounds. We will not allow purges based on nationalities," he said.

Yeltsin said some unspecified forces were probably counting on a racist clampdown "to sow panic, to lead the country to a state of emergency, to destroy the government and spread anarchy."

"All of the activities in the near future will be carried out strictly in accordance with the constitution and Russian laws," he added.

The president appointed First Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Aksyonenko to oversee the investigation into the blast at Kashirskoye Shosse in southern Moscow.

Interior Minister Vladimir Rusalov was tasked with setting up an emergency control center to oversee the battle against terrorism.

Monday's bombing of the apartment building came on the heels of another deadly blast Thursday in southeast Moscow in which a residential building blew up, killing 92 people.

It also coincided with a national day of mourning declared for the victims of last week's blast in Moscow, the September 4 bombing of a building housing Russian servicemen in Dagestan in which 64 died and the August 31 blast at a Moscow shopping mall near the Kremlin that killed one and wounded 40.

Meanwhile, police found a huge cache of explosives at an address not far from the site of the bomb blast.

Several sacks containing an explosive mixed with sugar were discovered at an address in Borisovskiy Prudi, in south of Moscow, a spokesman for the FSB domestic intelligence agency said.

The material was found during search operations ordered by President Boris Yeltsin as security was stepped up across the capital, which has suffered three deadly bombings in the space of two weeks.



BNP city chief Sadeq Hossain Khoka, MP, is flanked by Jinal Abedin Faruk MP (on his left) and former major general Z A Khan as his procession from BNP central office faces police resistance at the Kakrail crossing during hartal hours yesterday.

Sporadic blasts mark Ctg hartal

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 13: Sporadic blasts of crackers at different places of the port city marked the hartal today that continued without any major incidents of violence, police and witnesses said.

Police arrested seven pickets from the city during hartal today.

Truck loads of police and five platoons of paramilitary BDR were deployed at important points of the city to foil violent incidents.

However, a panicky situation has prevailed in the city after explosion of crackers since morning at Noor Ahmed Road, Kazir Dewri, WASA crossing, Jubilee road, Anderkilla, Bakalia, Chawkbazar, Agrabad, Port Road, and Alankar crossing.

Rallies and processions organised by pro-hartal activists were seen at various places of the city.

The ruling Awami League supporters also held rallies at New Market crossing and WASA crossing denouncing the hartal.

Pro- and anti-hartal activists clashed at WASA crossing at around 10am, witnesses said.

All kinds of vehicles except rickshaws stayed off the roads.

Railway sources said all trains ran as usual barring one express train.

Most of the offices — both private and public — were closed while shops and businesses remained shut.

At Chittagong port, cargo handling was carried out partially inside the jetties, but delivery was fully suspended, port sources said. Mills and factories at the industrial belts of Nasirabad, Fouzderhat, Kalurghat and Patenga suffered production loss due to thin attendance of workers, sources said.

Tremor rocks Turkey again

IZMIT, Turkey, Sept 13: A strong tremor rocked Turkey's northwest today, killing at least seven people, injuring over 200 and sending thousands rushing for open ground, in a region devastated by a deadly quake four weeks ago, reports Reuter.

Turkish and US seismologists put the strength of the latest tremor at 5.8 on the Richter scale with its centre in the province of Kocaeli, worst hit by the earthquake on August 17.

"I can say that these aftershocks have created panic," the Anatolian news agency quoted President Suleyman Demirel as saying. "I am worried people who were already very jittery are now panicking."

Anatolian said six people had died under falling masonry and rubble, three of them crushed inside a vehicle in the town of Golcuk and another three in the nearby city of Izmit, capital of Kocaeli province.

A woman died of a heart attack in the town of Adapazari, which was also hit hard in last month's quake.

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said 230 people had been injured in today's tremor. "These aftershocks may continue and I hope they will not be as violent as the one today. We will have to learn to live with them," he said.

Some 20 people were believed to be trapped under rubble in the seaside town of Golcuk, Anatolian said.

Three men on the roof of a house left partially submerged in the sea after last month's quake were missing after the building crumbled into the water during the aftershock.

Scores of terrified residents were injured by falling masonry or when they leaped from windows and balconies in fear they would be trapped under their shaking buildings.

Over 10000 foreigners arrested in Makkah

RIYADH, Sept 13: More than 10,000 foreigners without valid residency permits have been arrested in the Muslim holy city of Makkah, a Saudi police official said in Al-Bilad newspaper on Monday, reports AFP.

General Hassan Rashiwan, head of the city's passport department, said the arrests were made after three campaigns to track down illegal immigrants in the Makkah region, without saying when the campaigns took place.

The foreigners entered the kingdom as Muslim pilgrims or had fled their Saudi employers, the general said.

Saudi Arabia began a campaign against illegal immigrants in October 1997. About 1.5 million people, mostly from the Indian subcontinent, have since been expelled, according to figures published at the end of last year.



Some of the children detained at Motijheel thana merrily pose for photo yesterday before a police officer drove a Star lensman and two reporters away.

Nasim to hit back

From page 1

MP, he warned.

"The conspirators are bound to fail. I know how to handle them..." Nasim said, seeking people's cooperation.

Referring to Sunday's sit-in demonstration by BNP in the city, the home minister said: "They hurled bombs on police without any provocation. They also burnt and damaged vehicles and attacked petrol pumps and offices in the name of peaceful demonstration... No government can sit idle when people's life and property are destroyed. Whatever we did, we did in the public interest."

He maintained that BNP should not be allowed to agitate further after what it had done on Sunday in the name of agitation. "But we allowed them today as we believe in democracy."

They could not have carried out all these terrorist acts had AL workers been on the streets, said Nasim, also the AL organising secretary. He asked the party workers to guard against opposition anarchy on the streets today and tomorrow.

The home minister ridiculed the opposition demand for his resignation saying, "I haven't started my job as yet and you're demanding my resignation. I am yet to forget the police action on me and my party colleagues during your rule."

He said the government wanted to rule the country peacefully. But, it would never compromise with terrorism. "Khaleda Zia has been patronising."

Nasim said the current hartal was designed to send a wrong signal to the donors who met with the government yesterday (to review the progress on different fronts).

He claimed that people decided the hartal yesterday and would continue to do so in the next two days.

AL general secretary and LGD Minister Zillur Rahman found the three-day hartal totally illogical.

"Khaleda Zia has called the hartal to compel us to scrap the transit accord which we have never signed. Nor have we signed any deal on transshipment as yet."

Zillur questioned the wisdom of Khaleda Zia "for not understanding the difference between transit and transshipment despite the fact that she was once the prime minister."

"Transit or transshipment is only an excuse. In fact, she (Khaleda) plans to grab power by creating anarchy," the minister said, adding the opposition leader's dream would never come true.

Agriculture Minister Matia Choudhury said the hartal was

Young man stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was stabbed to death by a gang of miscreants in the city's Shayampur area Sunday night.

The dead was identified as Mohammed Liton, 22, son of Nuru Miah.

According to police, a gang of eight forcibly entered the house of Liton at about 9:30 pm and stabbed him mercilessly.

Liton was rushed to the Mitford Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case was lodged with Shayampur thana in this connection.

Poet Shamsur Rahman improving

The condition of renowned poet Shamsur Rahman, now under treatment at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICD), is gradually improving, hospital and family sources said, reports BSS.

He was admitted to the hospital after a heart attack in the early hours of Sunday.

His blood pressure and pulse are now normal and we are expecting that his condition would be further improved," Dr Nazrul Islam, doctor on duty at the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) of the hospital told BSS yesterday evening. He added, "we can't say that he is totally out of danger until the 72-hour period is over after an attack."

Poet Shamsur Rahman was rushed to the NICD after he complained of pain in his chest at 2 am on Sunday at his Shaymoli residence.

No tear gas shell or gunshot fired at Nat'l Mosque

By Staff Correspondent

Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh yesterday said that police did not fire any tear gas shell nor any gunshot at the Baitul Mukarram National mosque during the sit-in programme of the opposition on Sunday, according to a press release of the organisation.

The organisation described the news in this regard, published in a number of national dailies, as "baseless and confusing". It also said that no policeman entered the mosque compound during the incident.

2 bombs found on DU campus

Police yesterday found two live bombs in front of the Library of Dhaka University, a press release of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) said last night, reports BSS.

The press release said the pro-hartal elements left the bombs.

Dhaka's aid pie to shrink

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avoid placing new unproductive expenditure burdens on the limited resources of the budget.

Later, during the open discussion on governance, the ambassador of a western country said investment climate has deteriorated during the last two years due to the worsening law and order situation and the investment interest by US companies is falling due to rising risk factors including corruption.

He asked the government to issue a statement as to when and how the reform agenda will be implemented.

A bilateral development partner charged that defence expenditures are too high and lack transparency. This view was also supported by the WB.

Earlier, the WB representative said the donors were very concerned that the government had not been able to make much headway with the structural reforms necessary to unlock the private sector's economic potential, improve the coverage and quality of social services and directly improve the lives of the poor.

"The government's privatisation programme has stalled, and public enterprises continue to impose a large drain on national resources. The banking system remains very fragile and is a constraint to private sector development," he said.

"The power sector and Chittagong Port continue to perform very poorly, the quality of education and health services are very low, an ombudsman has yet to be appointed, legislation to establish the Human Rights Commission is still pending and only one of the PARC's recommendations is being implemented. The deteriorating law and order situation renders poor people as well as businesses vulnerable to violence and extortion. Consequently, growth has not been good enough to lift the country out of poverty in a reasonable time."

The WB representative also said the recent eviction of slum dwellers and sex workers without prior notice or rehabilitation arrangements have caused concern about human rights and governance.

"The government has claimed that the clearance of slums and brothels was necessary because they were fostering lawlessness by sheltering criminals, yet it is the innocent poor who suffer from the criminal elements who have suffered as a result of these interventions," Temple said.

"Donors would appreciate an assurance that there will be no more forcible evictions without relocation."

Development partners, like many other groups in civil society, believe these actions constitute a violation of human rights of the poor and reflect basic governance problems. Forcible eviction without relocation simply shifts poor people from some slums to others, inflicting suffering by disrupting their lives and livelihoods. We are concerned that these interventions will undermine the donor-supported efforts being made to help the hard-to-reach urban poor," he added.

Later, IMF expressed concern that the macro-economic policies may turn out to be overly expansionary on the current trend.

"In the fiscal area, revenue shortfalls, together with expenditure overruns, raised the budget deficit to more than five per cent of GDP in 1998-99. This was well above the post-flood budget deficit target," he said.

"With domestic bank financing exceeding the official monetary programme target, money growth was also higher than targeted. This aggravated the pressure on the net foreign assets of the banking sector, which turned out to be significantly lower than had been programmed."

It said the country risks significant shortfall in revenue collection and aid inflows. "If no tangible progress is made in reforming the ailing state-owned enterprises and banking sector, there may be new expenditure overruns to cover the liabilities of these sectors."

IMF said a closer look at the country's recent performance reinforces the concern raised by the donors at the April Paris meeting. It said industrial output was stagnant over the year and service sector also performed weakly. Exports were slow and domestic and foreign investment slackened with private sector activity remaining particularly weak.

It also called for a stronger and more front-loaded revenue effort to help release financial resources for the private sector and to cover the costs of much-needed reforms in the banking and SOEs over the medium term.

Given the 'fungibility' of financial resources, development partners have a legitimate interest in ensuring that all public expenditures are rigorously prioritised and monitored, IMF said.

The government's efforts to boost credit to industry by guaranteeing the issuance of bonds by the NCBs is worrisome because of the lack of progress in improving these banks and the fact that some of the bonds are denominated in foreign currency and carry non-concessional interest rates.

IMF also slammed the recent steps to boost commercial bank lending by lowering interest rates, including reduction of Bangladesh Bank's discount rate by one full percentage point, and said this has heightened the risk that monetary policy will be too lax.

Attack on GF human chain programme: 30 injured

By Staff Correspondent

Gano Forum yesterday claimed that at least 30 people were injured when 'terrorists' backed by Awami League in collaboration with police attacked the participants of its human chain programme in different parts of the city.

Police also picked up 14 of its leaders and workers when they were assembling in front of the High Court to join the programme.

The party yesterday organised the human chain programme to protest the government's move to evict slum dwellers from the city without any arrangement for their rehabilitation, said a press release.

It alleged that a group of terrorists, led by ruling party MP Rahmatullah, made an attack on the slum dwellers and Gano Forum activists in Mohakhali area.

Police resorted to baton charge on the participants in front of the High Court and arrested 14 leaders and activists of the organisation, including a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court.

The Gano Forum will hold a rally at Muktangan in the city on September 19 to protest the attack and the government's move to introduce new anti-terrorism act.

Allowance for widows, telecom policy okayed

The cabinet yesterday approved a policy to give allowances to widows and women deserted by their husbands, reports BSS.

According to an official handout, Tk 25 crore has been earmarked in the budget of the current fiscal for the allowances.

According to the Cabinet decision, a monthly allowance of Tk 100 will be given to five widows and women deserted by their husbands in each ward of every union of the country.

The meeting also endorsed the Bangladesh telecommunication policy. The new policy would encourage competitive environment among the public and private sector operators to ensure quality telecom services.

The policy will pave way for increased foreign investment in the telecom sector, the handout added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the cabinet meeting held at her office. Ministers, State Ministers in charge of different ministries, cabinet secretary, principal secretary to the prime minister, secretaries concerned and members of the planning commission were present.

3 electrocuted in city

By Staff Correspondent

Three employees of a dyeing factory were electrocuted and four others injured near Balurmath under Shayampur thana in the city yesterday afternoon.

The dead were identified as Khorsed, 25, Shah Alam, 20, and Mamun, 17, hospital sources said.

According to hospital sources, the incident took place at around 4:30 pm when the employees of Chamak Dyeing Factory came in contact with a live electric wire in the factory.

All seven were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctors declared three of them dead.

The injured, identified as Jahangir, 18, Dulal, 19, Gafur, 20 and Ruhul Amin, 20, are undergoing treatment at DMCH.

The bodies were sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy. An unnatural death case was filed with Shayampur thana yesterday.

Amu acting AL chief

Amir Hossain Amu, president member of Bangladesh Awami League, will perform the duties and responsibilities of President of the party during the absence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister, who is also the president of Bangladesh Awami League, will be away from the country to address the 54th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Comilla Congress on environment begins today

KOTBARI, Comilla, Sept 13: A four-day congress of environmental journalists from the Asia Pacific and Commonwealth countries begins here tomorrow to discuss media strategies to cover the issues of water, one of the most crucial natural resources of the current world, reports BSS.

The joint congress of Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (APEJ) and Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA) is bringing together some 115 journalists, environmental watchdogs and experts from 32 countries, organisers said.