

## 3 killed in suicide bomb attacks in Israel, Gaza

AFP, Hadera

An explosives-laden car blew up near the central bus station in this northern Israeli town in six months, killing two presumed bombers and injuring at least 12 other people.

"A terrible disaster could have occurred but apparently it was a miracle more people were not injured," a spokesman for the state-run Egged bus company told Israeli public radio.

Israeli police said the two people killed were both apparently involved in the attack in Hadera, on the coast some 70 km northwest of Jerusalem.

"The Israeli army thinks its positions are impregnable it is mistaken, because we have candidates for martyrdom who will know how to hit the Israelis wherever they are," he told journalists.

Hamas' armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, said in a statement that one of its activists, Hussein Abu Nasr, was killed when the bomb-laden truck he was driving exploded near an Israeli military position in the Gaza Strip.

"The martyr Abu Nasr wanted to tell the Israelis that every aggression demands a riposte," Yassin added.

Hamas has said it had 10 volunteers for suicide attacks, and described the Netanya blast as the seventh.

But it has also said that it has would-be martyrs queuing up to attack the Israelis.

In November, two Israelis were killed when a car bomb exploded during rush hour in Hadera, an attack that was also claimed by the armed wing of Hamas.

A spokesman for Hadera police said 12 people were injured, one of them moderately, though media reports said some 30 were hurt, including many treated for shock.

## Tamil Nadu govt faces severe financial crisis

REUTERS, Madras

The newly-elected provincial government in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu is facing a severe financial crisis and is running on borrowings from the central bank, the state's Governor said yesterday.

Governor Fathima Beevi told legislators the new government of convicted former film star Jayaram Jayalalitha had inherited an exchequer with unpaid liabilities of 70 billion rupees (\$149.1 million) as of March 31.

"The state government is now forced to depend on borrowings from the Reserve Bank of India even to meet its day-to-day cash requirements," Beevi said in her legislature opening address.

Jayalalitha, who led her All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam to a landslide win state polls this month, was appointed chief minister last week despite being barred from contesting the polls because of a graft conviction.

The controversy over Beevi's decision to appoint the former screen siren has triggered a slew of petitions in the courts challenging Jayalalitha's right to hold office.

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She did not provide any details on the measures.

## Mamun realised ransom

FROM PAGE 1

While coming out of the hotel on October 14 evening, Mamun's accomplices Didar, Masum, Jaher, Shamim and Khorshed forced them into a car and took them to a house at Sanir Akhra in the city's Demra area.

The terrorists demanded Tk 1 crore as ransoms. As they refused, the gang tortured them. Mamun was also present during the torture, Didar told police.

At one stage, Narayan agreed to pay the ransom and asked his wife in Chittagong over mobile phone to come to Dhaka with Tk 1 crore.

His wife managed Tk. 25 lakh including Tk 18.35 lakh from encashed savings bonds of Sonali Bank. She came to Dhaka and handed over the money to the terrorists at the house. Narayan was released on October 16.

Being released, Narayan went to Tejgaon police station and filed an

## 30 shops, 7 houses gutted at Ramgarh

BSS, Khagacchari

Israeli public radio said the bomb-laden car, a taxi, blew up beside a public bus in Hadera and that two of those injured were babies.

Town mayor Israel Sadan told public television the car was rammed into the side of bus number 841 which was travelling from Tel Aviv to the northern border town of Kiryat Shmona.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the spiritual head of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, warned earlier Friday that its suicide bombers would continue their operations against the Israelis, following the failure of the attack against the army in the Gaza Strip.

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The army said no Israelis were injured in that incident.

The blasts came one week after a suicide bombing at a shopping mall in the nearby coastal resort of Netanya, which killed five Israelis and was claimed by the radical Palestinian movement Hamas.

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## Money recovered

FROM PAGE 1

To Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DCMH) and arrested the bullet-hit muggers -- Munna and Sohagand recovered the money from their possession.

According to a DMP press release, SI Abdullah drew his salaries and other bills on Thursday and then went to Mitford Hospital to see the body of a relative, killed by muggers.

## Wedding

FROM PAGE 12

one of the most difficult that occurred in Israel," Sharon said. "I would define this as a national disaster."

By Friday afternoon, the death toll had reached at least 30 as body after body was pulled from the pile of rubble, concrete slabs and twisted metal. An army spokesman, Lt. Olivier Rafaowicz, said dozens of people were still missing. The death toll was expected to rise.

Five bodies were found near a table, including a couple embracing each other, said Yehuda Meshi Zahav, head of an ultra-Orthodox rescue volunteer group.

Maj Gen Gabi Ofir, in charge of the rescue operation, said 309 people were taken to hospitals with injuries. Hospital doctors said many children were among them, including a 3-month-old.

Among the injured were the newlyweds. Assi was treated for minor injuries and released. But Keren, carried out on a stretcher in her fluffy white dress, suffered hip and chest injuries and might need surgery, doctors said.

## Locomotives

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Besides, the contract accommodates supply of excessive spare parts. He alleged that if properly negotiated Bangladesh could have had saved a lot of money from this purchase and invested more in developing infrastructure.

He added that Rites had previously supplied locomotives by winning a competitive bid. As per the previous contract, it stationed a technical support team in Bangladesh.

The leader of the technical team is now maintaining high political liaison and is virtually pushing all the business deals behind the scene, the industry insider said.

However, a railway official said that the purchase was not overpriced. "Indian locomotives are cheaper than the locomotives made by any other countries," he said. "For instance, the price of one German locomotive is equal to three Indian locomotives."

He added that the government was pursuing all necessary rail infrastructure projects to link Dhaka with North Bengal. There was no shortage of fund. "By 2002, Dhaka would be directly connected to North Bengal through the Bangabandhu Bridge," he noted.

Police said they have extracted from Didar sensational information about criminal activities of Mamun and his gang. Didar told police that he and other gang members had abducted Narayan on Mamun's instruction but Mamun was not present during the abduction.

Didar will be produced before the court today after expiry of his remand.

Mamun, a Ward Commissioner of Chittagong City Corporation and a Juba League leader, is now in jail. He was charged with assaulting two journalists of a Chittagong-based daily. There are several other criminal cases against him.

## Shamsur Rahman murder

FROM PAGE 12

A top ranking leader of city Awami League termed Litu as innocent, particularly so far as Shamsur Rahman murder is concerned.

"We shall try to prove his innocence," the city AL leader said.

On the other hand, some other leaders of the party want Litu to be punished for his criminal acts.

Litu has denied his involvement in the murder of Shamsur Rahman.

Litu phoned this correspondent at midnight on Thursday expressing his regret for being charged with the murder case. I had a great respect for Shamsur Rahman as he was a close friend of my slain uncle JP leader Abul Kashem. I have been

## Vajpayee formally invites Musharraf

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abduction case. A warrant of arrest was issued by a court in Dhaka against the accused.

On May 23, the investigation officer of the case, AKMS Iqbal of Tejgaon thana, went to Chittagong, arrested Didar and brought him to Dhaka.

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I invite you to walk this high road with us," the Indian premier said.

"General Pervez Musharraf will send a reply shortly," a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry later said, giving no further details.

AP says, Gen Musharraf is placing no conditions on his acceptance of India's surprise invitation to hold bilateral peace talks, but believes the people of disputed Kashmir should also be included, Musharraf's chief spokesman said yesterday.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Gen Rashid Qureshi said "if the government of India is sincere, this is a welcome step."

"We welcome India's talks offer



PHOTO: INTERNET

UAE Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research presenting the annual Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammad award for Natural History to Dr Reza Khan, Director of Dubai Zoo, in Dubai Thursday. Dr Reza, a Bangladeshi zoologist, is also the author of two books, *Wildcats in the UAE* and *Indigenous trees in the UAE*.

## Larma on CHT situation

FROM PAGE 1

army," he claimed.

Forces opposed to the CHT agreement killed two supporters of the agreement at Naniarach in Rangamati on May 21, he said.

He blamed the "vested quarter" and the "settlers" for all these acts of terrorism and said these are being done "to scuttle the agreement".

Larma reiterated his demand for a separate voter list for CHT, which will include only the "permanent residents". Election would not be allowed to be held in CHT without such a new voter list, he said.

The press conference was arranged to mark formation of a 65-member National Convening Committee of Bangladesh Adibashi Forum (BAF), of which Larma is the convenor. It was formed at a meeting here on Thursday with Larma in chair.

Larma said Khassia and Garo people are being driven out of their lands at Madhabkundu and at least 500,000 trees worth Tk 11 crore in forests there are threatened. He questioned the wisdom behind the expensive project, driving out the adibashis (tribal ethnic minority) from their ancestral lands while "the government is talking about distributing khas lands to the landless".

Larma, also questioned another such tourism project at Madhupur in

Sanjib Drong, its member-secretary and Anil Yan Yun, headman of the Khassia tribe from Maulibazar, were also present at the press conference.

Larma read out a statement containing an eight-point demand of the BAF, which include immediate suspension of work of the Eco-Park project at Madhabkundu in Maulibazar.

He demanded preference to adibashis in distribution of khas lands and permanent settlement of their land right.

Larma said BAF has been formed to protect the ethnic rights of adibashis.

He alleged that since independence, Adibashis, who comprise 45 tribes including those in CHT, are deprived of their constitutional recognition as indigenous people and of their ethnic rights, which is threatening their existence.

Larma demanded exemplary punishment to those who raped the three women at Khagrachhari and the killers of Gidita Rehma, a Garo woman in Madhupur.

Tangail district in the lands of Garo people. Sanjib Drong said the project was taken up in 1997 without informing the adibashis.

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## Filling stations defy ban

FROM PAGE 12

oil also reduces longevity of engines, experts say.

The ban followed a prolonged campaign by different groups and the media.

The government in its January 1 order also said that import or sale of lubricating oil below Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation's (BPC) specifications would be liable to action under the Petroleum Act, 1974 and the BPC Ordinance, 1976.

The order prohibits production, import and marketing of lubricating oil below API SC/CC grade engine oil for motor vehicles and API/CC or JASO FB for two-stroke engine of auto-rickshaws.

It also prohibited bulk supply of lubricating oil by tank lorries and said it could be marketed only in drums, cans or sachets with the quality, grade and price marked on

the containers.

"Industrial grade" lubricating oil also cannot be imported, blended or sold without specific demand letter of any company.

But the order remains in paper five months after its issuance.

Even T2 engine oil imported by BPC for two-stroke auto-rickshaws is not being used by any one simply because low grade or recycled engine oil is available at petrol pumps and shops.

Talking to this correspondent, some auto-rickshaw drivers said they are unaware of availability of T2 engine oil. "Mixing mobil (engine oil) with petrol reduces fuel consumption", one of them said.

The World Bank, in cooperation with an NGO Society for Urban Environmental Protection (SUEP)

recently trained 1000 auto-rickshaw drivers on use of proper engine oil.

SUEP on April 17 wrote a letter to the Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners Association, urging it to take steps to make T2 engine oil available to auto-rickshaw drivers. But the letter went unheeded, says Akhtar Hossain Babu of SUEP.

When contacted, Lt Col (Rtd) Abdul Mannan, BP, President of Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners Association, said the loose engine oil being sold in petrol pumps and shops now is from the old stock.