



PHOTO: QAMRUL AHSAN

Police foil attempts made by activists of Imam Parishad to attack hotel Al-Qadr in Khulna city yesterday. Photo shows law enforcers club an activist of the Parishad at KDA Avenue.

### Imam Parishad activists clash with police in Khulna: 20 hurt

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between police and activists of Khulna Zila Imam Parishad in the city yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the trouble began at around 3 pm when police prevented the leaders and activists of Imam Parishad from marching towards Hotel Al-Qadr at KDA Avenue.

The Imam Parishad brought out the procession demanding arrest of Dr Azizur Rahman, owner of Al-Qadr Hotel and director of Al-Quran Research Centre, for his reported blasphemous comments on Quran recently.

Angered by police action, members of Imam Parishad started hurling bombs and brickchips at law

### ASM NURUNNABI

Commuters in Dhaka City go through the daily ordeal of reaching their destinations by various modes of transport, such as buses, rickshaws, bicycles, etc. Besides rickshaws, buses and minibuses are the most widely used modes of transport for commuters. Commuting by rickshaws can be very frustrating, as they are slow and may often take hours to make their way inching through the traffic jam. But buses and minibuses can be equally or even more frustrating, as most don't have the minimum provisions for passenger convenience.

Most buses that ply the city roads are in a very run-down state with old engines barely pulling away, pitch-black smoke coming out from the exhaust and the paint peeling off the body, which also has numerous jagged edges sticking out dangerously. The pathetic state of affairs due to the authorities' severe neglect of the situation and failure to provide even a minimally efficient service for the passengers has been

### DOWN TO EARTH

## Woes of commuters in Dhaka city

continuing for a fairly long time without any appreciable improvement.

The woes of the bus passengers are multifaceted. First, these buses carry passengers way beyond their capacity. Some of the buses bear catchwords such as seating service, express service, gate-lock system etc. But, all these are mere empty slogans. In reality, passengers are herded together like cattle inside the bus and there is no express service as buses stop frequently to load passengers beyond their capacity

making sure that every inch of available space is 'utilised'. Passengers are sometimes seen hanging from the edge of the bus-door, handles etc. or perched precariously on foot-boards. Bus conductors are, by and large, bad mannered. Often times, when traffic jams are too heavy to stop at the designated bus-stop, passengers are forced to get down at places near their actual stop, often in the middle of the road, putting them at risk of accidents. Contrary to the so-called claim of 'seating gate-lock service', bus doors are almost never locked in order to give people the idea of more available room inside and also to get passengers in and out of the bus in a jiffy. Some buses make stops at busy intersections to load and unload passengers. It is easy to imagine what hazards such practices may entail.

Buses, minibuses and even baby taxis do not seem to care much about traffic rules. The way that the city's vehicular traffic is fast increasing, it has become an urgent

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## Retaliation for killing of partyman BNP cadres go on rampage, set houses afire, beat AL men

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore**

Angry BNP cadres went on the rampage at Bonpara in Boraigram upazila on Thursday, fatally injuring an AL leader and setting houses on fire, after a local BNP leader was ambushed and shot dead in town by miscreants allegedly belonging to AL, sources said.

The violence erupted at 8pm on Thursday when Abdul Alim Mollah alias Alam, 32, the upazila convenor of the ruling party's front organisation Jatiyatabadi Secchhasebok Dal, was ambushed and shot dead by miscreants in front of Hiramon Cinema Hall as he was starting his

motorbike. The miscreants also hacked him indiscriminately to confirm his death.

As the news of Alam's killing spread and the LGRD deputy minister Ruhul Kuddus Talukhdar Dulu blamed AL for the murder, about a hundred BNP workers equipped with firearms and sharp weapons captured all the local streets.

The agitated BNP workers set fire to the local office of AL and office of the weekly Dipta Kantha, and damaged the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

At around 9:30pm, they attacked the chamber of upazila AL president Dr Aynal Haque in the bazaar area,

dragging out the physician from his chamber and hacking him mercilessly with sharp weapons. Police managed to rescue the AL leader from the clutches of the agitated BNP workers and sent him to Natore Sadar Hospital in a police van.

Haque, 65, however, succumbed to his injuries at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital at 2.30pm yesterday.

Police failed to check the agitated BNP men as the situation spiralled totally out of control when the body of Alam reached Bonpara yesterday morning after autopsy at Natore morgue.

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## 2 burnt alive, shops gutted at Badda

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Two persons were burnt alive in a fire at Kuril Bishaw Road in the city's Badda area early yesterday.

The dead, identified as Rony and Jalal, were employees of Darbar Tyre Shop.

Badda police said the two were asleep inside the shop during the incident. Fire brigade sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at Darbar Tyre Shop at about 4:30 am and soon engulfed Kazi General Store, Bismillah Auto Services, Babul Hotel and Restaurant and Gani General Store.

Four fire fighting units from Kurmitola and Tejgaon fire stations rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze.

Badda police recovered the bodies from the spot and sent them to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.



PHOTO: STAR

The site (left) for Seismic Observatory in Sylhet town. Construction remains suspended for weeks after revision of budget twice earlier.

## 2 cops hurt in attack by drug peddlers in Khulna

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Two policemen were injured in an armed attack by drug peddlers at Skid Ghat (river port) here on Thursday night.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Khulna thana police went to Skid Ghat where two rival gangs of drug peddlers -- one led by Ali and the other by Momin -- were preparing to take control of a haven for illegal drug traders at Skid Ghat.

Sensing the presence of police, drug peddlers of both the gangs swooped on them (police). They opened fire and hurled bombs at policemen, leaving sergeant Faruk Hossain and Havilder Ansarul Haq injured.

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## Construction of Sylhet seismic observatory stalled again

**IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet**

Construction work of the Sylhet Seismic Observatory is stalled for weeks now after interruption several times and revision of budget twice earlier.

The latest time limit for completion of the construction work was December last year, sources said.

The original budget for the construction work was Tk 98.93 lakh, which was revised to Tk 1.21 crore later.

Due to the unusual delay in its construction, two other seismic observatories of the same category in Rangpur and Dhaka can not be readied for work even after completion of their construction, the sources said.

Besides, modernisation of the Chittagong observatory with modern equipment is also being delayed for the same reason, they said.

According to experts, Sylhet is considered a "high risk zone" for

earthquake as it is near Assam and Meghalaya states of India. And tremors jolted Chittagong area thrice in the last one week.

The Sylhet observatory is part of a Tk 18 crore project which includes setting up of two seismic observatories in Dhaka and Rangpur and modernisation of the existing one in Chittagong. Four seismographs are to be installed at the observatories. The project work began on 2000.

Construction work of the Sylhet observatory began on March 23, 2001.

The work was first suspended in April 2001 as extortionists demanded toll.

The work resumed after a month and a six-member committee headed by the defence secretary was formed by the government to monitor the work every week.

The work was suspended again on June 3, 2001 due to rains and death of a labourer in a landslide.

The defence secretary along

## Govt out to wipe out AL, says Hasina

**UNB, Dhaka**

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned the government of consequences of blocking constitutional path of movement against "repression and corruption," indicating that people may take an alternative course of protest.

She also asked the people and her party members to prepare the lists of administrative and police officers who she said are harbouring terrorists and letting them loose against Awami League.

"We are carrying out constructive movement ... But did the government think of the consequence of denying us peaceful way of protest?" she told a meeting of elected office bearers of Barisal and Bhola Bar Associations at

Awami League central office.

Hasina observed that the BNP-Jamaat regime was not possibly familiar with the people of this country. "They would rise in protest with the escalation of torture by the present regime," she said.

About alleged political persecution of AL leaders and workers everywhere since October 1 election, she said since the alliance could not win vote genuinely, they are suffering from lack of confidence and now choose the path of "Eliminating Awami League to consolidate their power."

There is no rule of law, no democracy. People are scared ... It's a total chaos and anarchy," she said in a swinging criticism.

Hasina narrated how her party men, including Bahauddin Nasim

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## Three listed terrorists held in Ctg

**BSS, Ctg**

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) arrested six people, including three listed terrorists from different parts of the city yesterday and on Thursday night.

Detectives arrested listed terrorist Mahbubur Rahman, 26, alias Iqbal from Saraipara area under Pahartali thana yesterday.

Panchlaish thana police nabbed listed terrorist Baktiar Hossain, 28, from Shulokbahar area while Kamafuli thana police arrested M Ismail, 30, with a light gun from Badarpura area on Thursday night.

Kotowali thana police rounded up Siddique Ahmad, 42, M Aziz, 40, Nur Mohammad, 41, and recovered 10-litre of locally made liquor from Station Road yesterday morning.

## Police recover 125 bombs from Nakhalpara slum, 1 held

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Detectives raided Bhawalbagh slum at Nakhalpara in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday and arrested a leader of drug peddlers.

They also recovered 125 bombs and 1530 bottles of phensidyl from the slum.

Detectives headed by inspector Sirajul Islam raided the slum at about 2:30 pm and arrested Delware Hossain, leader of drug peddlers.

Terrorists belonging to Ajam, Ata and Shafiq groups are involved in illegal drug trading in the area.

A case was filed in this regard.

## Khulna BNP braces for showdown over KCC polls

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Khulna City BNP braces for a violent intra-party showdown due to the growing rift between its two rival factions over the forthcoming Khulna City Corporation (KCC) elections.

The intra-party rivalry has already taken an alarming turn following the filing of nominations for ward commissioner.

Situation in Khulna City BNP office remained explosive till 3pm yesterday as agitated activists of both the factions were flexing their muscles trying to intimidate each other.

Some listed terrorists now being harboured allegedly by one of the groups were found brandishing small arms in front of the party office yesterday.

Leader of one of the groups advocate Shaikh Tayebur Rahman, who is the official four-party candidate for mayor, has formed a separate nomination board for finalising nomination of candidates for ward commissioner in 31 wards of Khulna City. Whip Ashraf Hossain has been made convenor of the board, while city BNP president M Nurul Islam MP, Ali Asgar Lobi MP and Sheikh Tayebur Rahman its members.

The newly formed nomination board resolved unanimously not to nominate terrorists in any of the 31

wards. Whip Ashraf Hossain urged police to immediately nab wanted terrorists against whom warrants of arrest have been issued. They cannot be candidates of four-party alliance, the whip said while interviewing the aspirants.

He said those who have not applied for nomination with the board would not be considered loyal to BNP.

The nomination board backed by city mayor was formed on March 22 with MPs Golam Sarwar and Shah Ruhul Quddus as members.

On the other hand, the other rival group being led by city BNP secre

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Mar 30		6-13 pm
Mar 31	5-52 am	

Prayer Timings		
Mar 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation