

Azad still not out of danger, family gets death threats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prominent writer Humayun Azad was fighting for life on a ventilator at a city hospital and his family reported receiving death threats by telephone yesterday, a day after he suffered critical stab injuries by unknown assailants.

Doctors of the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) attending to 56-year Azad, also professor of

Bangla at Dhaka University, said they were unable to say whether he would survive before 72 hours of anaesthesia ended.

Police were yet to identify his attackers, but arrested a leader of Dhaka University unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student front of main opposition Awami League, suspecting his part in the attack.

"Doctors here are not making

further remarks," Smita Azad, daughter of Azad, who was stabbed with butcher's knives in front of Bangla Academy on Friday night, told The Daily Star from CMH at 9:00 last night.

Azad was put on the ventilator in the intensive care unit at the CMH last night after doctors conducted two prolonged operations on his left jaw and head.

The operations, which began

immediately after he was given blood on admission, continued until 5:00am.

Azad was taken to Popular Diagnostic Centre in Dhanmondi yesterday morning under police guard as the CT scanning machine at the CMH was inoperative.

FLYING RUMOURS

As the rumour of his death flew in Dhaka and elsewhere, anxious

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Nation in fury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday strongly denounced Friday's heinous attack on eminent litterateur and educationist Humayun Azad.

"The attack on Professor Azad unleashed by government-patronised terrorists is a serious blow to freedom of speech, right to expression of opinion and exercise of freethinking," she said in a statement.

The leader of opposition in

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Writers feel insecure

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Writers, poets and intellectuals have expressed their deep sense of insecurity in the wake of the murderous attack on Dr Humayun Azad, now fighting for his life at Dhaka's

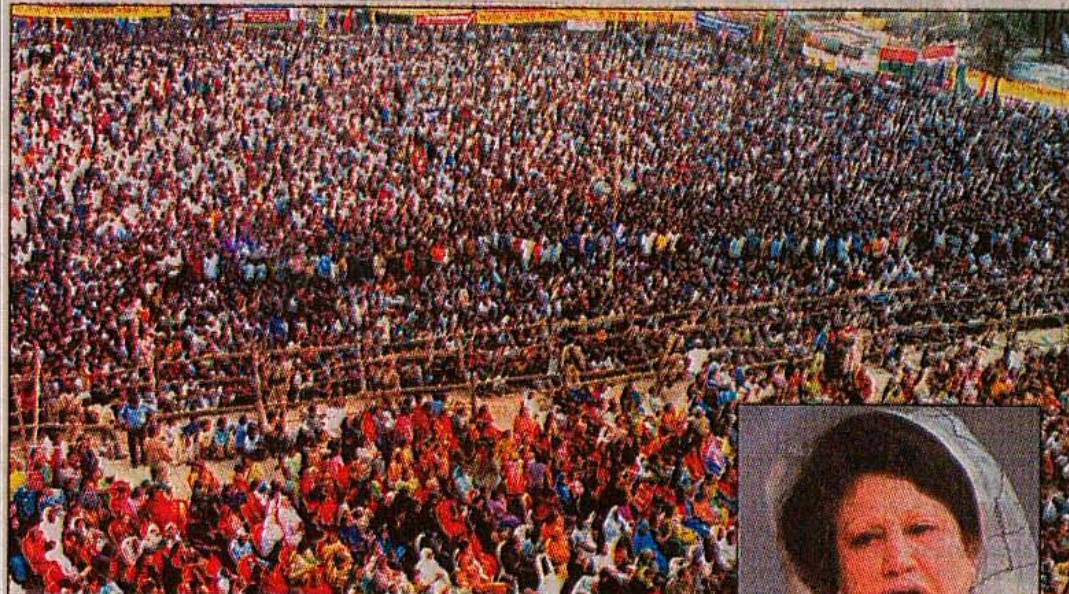
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No class at DU until culprits nabbed

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) yesterday decided to suspend taking classes at Dhaka University (DU) from today until the attackers of their fellow teacher and prominent writer Humayun Azad were held for justice.

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia addresses a rally yesterday at Bashabo playground to counter Awami League demand for resignation; a partial view of the rally crowd.

Govt won't step down an hour before term

Khaleda terms attack on Humayun Azad part of AL's pre-hartal violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday dismissed Awami League's demands for the immediate resigna-

tion of the government and mid-term polls, saying her coalition would serve out the five-year term.

Referring to Friday's attack on writer Humayun Azad, she said:

"The barbaric attack on the respected teacher is pre-planned and bent on creating panic ahead of a hartal. The hateful act formed part

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Students ring the blood-smeared spot, left, yesterday where unknown assailants stabbed prominent writer Humayun Azad a day ago; Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, right, walks toward the Combined Military Hospital along with her Awami League colleagues to see the Dhaka University teacher after her car was barred from entering the cantonment.



PHOTO: STAR

Hasina, B Chy barred from going to CMH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No visitor, not even Leader of Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, was allowed to see Prof Humayun Azad at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka Cantonment last night.

Former president AQM

Badruddoza Chowdhury and his son BNP lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury were also stopped at Banani on their way to the hospital.

Since yesterday evening, all people intending to visit Azad at the CMH were barred either from entering the cantonment area or

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The book that got him marked for death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Humayun Azad's satirical book 'Pak Sar Zamin Saad Baad', which most likely caused Friday's assassination attempt that the writer survived with life-threatening injuries, focuses mainly on the psyche of an Islamic militant who wants to

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DU swells with protest

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) yesterday burst into spontaneous protest against the attack on Humayun Azad, as thousands of students and teachers brought out processions

and covered their faces with black cloth.

Amidst a sombre mood, they demanded resignation of Home Minister Altaf Hossain for failure to ensure people's safety.

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Motia, scores hurt during hartal

Cops bar AL activists from gathering, over 200 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 200 opposition activists were arrested and scores of others wounded in attacks by police and government loyalists in Dhaka and other major cities during the main opposition Awami League (AL)-enforced dawn-to-dusk country-wide hartal yesterday.

The law-enforcers arrested 69 AL leaders and activists, 31 of them women, in the capital alone. They also beat up women leaders, and

activists including former minister and frontline AL leader Motia Chowdhury at Bangabandhu Avenue in the morning. Motia lay down in the street till the end of hartal hours to protest the police action, according to witnesses.

Police did not allow the opposition activists to gather in the capital to stage demonstrations during the 12-hour shutdown, fourth of its kind this month aiming to overthrow the BNP-led four-party coalition

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Awami League leader Motia Chowdhury falls to the ground during yesterday's hartal on Bangabandhu Avenue as cops tried to shove her into a prison van. Her dress torn, she lay on the street for 10 hours until the hartal ended at 6:00pm.

PHOTO: AFP

ICC U-19 WORLD CUP Indo-Pak duel today

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinals of the Fifth ICC U-19 World Cup kicks off with the most anticipated clash between India and Pakistan at the Bangabandhu National Stadium this afternoon.

The day-night contest will start at 1:30pm with Bangladesh Television airing the 50-over battle royal live.

While the first Cup game of the knockout phase could not have promised any bigger contest,

Australia will be looking to cross the second last hurdle against Ireland at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong as they attempt for a consolation Plate trophy.

But the focus will certainly be on the mouthwatering Asian duel when the youths of the two bitter rivals lock horns only a month before their seniors renew their own special rivalry.

The only disappointment for

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Abducted 6-yr-old boy found dead in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Local police Friday recovered the body of a six-year old boy who was abducted from Baghmara upazila in Rajshahi on Tuesday.

Being informed, family members found the body of Raihanul Haque, son of small businessman Abdus Samad, at a ditch near their Khoira village residence in the evening and called police, sources said.

Baghmara police sent the victim's bruised body to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for autopsy yesterday.

Unknown miscreants kidnapped Raihan on Tuesday morning when he was playing at a field near his house.

Sending a letter to his father the next day, Raihan's captors demanded Tk 60,000 for his release. They also threatened to kill Raihan and abduct his sister Sheuli if police were informed of the matter.

A case was lodged with Baghmara Police Station yesterday, but police failed to nab anyone till the writing of this report at 6:00 last evening.

Rubbish rip-off

'Garbage mobsters' charge high rates for door-to-door collection

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Hoodlums with backing from local politicians have taken over most door-to-door garbage collection in Dhaka over the last 10 years, forcing every house to pay Tk 200 a month.

The shady business is thriving on about 300,000 houses under 180,000 Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) holding numbers. Although some consider it a valuable service, people who refuse to pay high rates face harassment - sometimes leading to physical harm.

A landlord who owns a 50-room apartment building in Kathal Bagan awoke in the morning to the stink of a huge pile of rotting garbage on his doorstep, as he refused to pay Tk 20 a room - Tk 1,000 a month in total for garbage pickup last week.

"It is too expensive. My tenants don't want to give them any money," said the homeowner, who did not want to be identified for fear of backlash.

Dhaka residents produce 4,000 tonnes of kitchen waste a day, Sohel Faruque, chief of the DCC conservancy department, told The Daily Star.

The DCC trucks garbage from local dumps to a central landfill but does not pick up waste door to door. Faruque said he received some complaints, mostly from posh neighbourhoods such as Gulshan and Banani where the rates are the highest. He stopped short of saying he cannot regulate 'garbage mobsters', adding: "The city corporation has no legal provision to go with door-to-door collection."

Faruque admitted he signed letters of permission for a number of operators to collect garbage from house to house and said they do not pay taxes, worker benefit or hold trade licences. "Under the municipal act, I am not the person to see who dumps garbage at local sites."

Abul Khayer Bablu, a ward

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Kushtia-1 by-polls today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The by-polls in Kushtia-1 constituency will be held in the 14 unions of Daulatpur today.

A total of 2,68,334 voters would exercise their right to franchise at 101 polling centres between 8:00am and 4:00pm, Election Commission (EC) sources said.

The EC has taken strict security measures ahead of the election. From Friday, it deployed 650 army and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles personnel alongside police to maintain law and order during the polls.

Some 50 magistrates, 6 upazila nirbahi officers and 25 officers-in-charge of police would be kept on duty to ensure a free and fair election while 101 presiding officers, 535 assistant presiding officers and 1070 polling officers would conduct the election, sources added.

Amidst the main opposition Awami League's (AL) boycott of the election, eight candidates including an independent one are contesting the poll. The AL stood off the

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