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## Few metres from death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was just 12:25pm. The call for prayer wafted from the nearby mosque as Awami League leader Ahsanullah Master, MP, stood up to leave the dais set for the council of ward No. 10 unit of Shechchhasebak League.

A staccato burst of fires rocked the Noagaon MA Majid Mian High School field. For the next five minutes, all hell broke loose as the guns blazed away.

Nobody knew what is happening, or why. Only they knew they have ducked death anyhow. Some dived under tables, some just lay there unprotected until the guns stopped.

The nine to 10 assailants came to the council venue scaling a chest-high boundary wall in the southeastern corner of the school and planted themselves behind the dais.

"I found the gang to whip out their firearms and spray the dais with bullets from behind the decorative curtain," said a woman who witnessed the wanton killing from the rooftop of a nearby house.

"Taking a few bullets, Master

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

# AL lawmaker gunned down at rally

## 3 more including schoolboy killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed assailants killed prominent Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ahsanullah Master and a schoolboy and injured another five in a burst of gunfire at a conference in Tongi yesterday, sparking widespread outrage that also killed two people in the industrial town.

A gang of nine to 10 assailants sprayed Master with bullets at about 12:25pm from behind the dais at Noagaon MA Majid Mian High School in his home town, when he stood up to leave the scene on hearing the call for prayer from the nearby mosque.

Omar Faruq Ratan, 18, a student of the school, died on the scene and day-labourer Afaz Uddin, 38, and Hanif died after suffering injuries by stray bullets fired from a clash between angry armed protesters and law-enforcers.

Afaz was sitting on the roof of the house of Aziz Mia in Notun Bazar when a bullet hit him in the abdomen. He died at the DMCH, but the circumstances surrounding the death of Hanif could not be known last night.

Jamal Hossain, 35, Babu, 14, Sharifuddin Akash, 32, Mahfuzur Rahman Mahal, 40, and Hashem Mollick, 75, suffered critical injuries in the attack on the conference of ward No. 10 unit of Shechchhasebak



Ahsanullah Master League, the volunteers' front of the main opposition party.

The AL called a hartal for tomorrow, stick- and iron rod-wielding demonstrators uprooted railway lines in Tongi, cut the town's road links to Gazipur, torched three offices of local BNP and its front organisations and damaged at least

50 vehicles in protest. "After speech by local leaders, convenor of Tongi Upazila Shechchhasebak League Mojibur Rahman announced names of newly elected president and general secretary when we heard call for Juma prayers," said injured Sharifuddin Akash, who was sitting near the dais.

"The leader (Master) stood up and asked the organisers to end the programme, saying he'll attend the Juma prayers. He said the names of other members of the committee will be announced later," said Akash, also member of the convening committee of Tongi Upazila Shechchhasebak League.

"As he was waving hands to the crowd in a gesture to leave, several gunshots from behind the stage rocked the area and I found him collapsing on the stage," he said, adding he himself took a bullet in his right arm.

As gunshots stopped, some of the organisers found Master lying on the dais with blood gushing out from three bullet wounds in the chest.

Ratan, who appeared in SSC

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Supporters stretcher Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ahsanullah Master to Dhaka Chest Diseases Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

PHOTO: STAR

## AL calls hartal for tomorrow, blames govt for killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) has called a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal tomorrow to protest the killing of Ahsanullah Master, a party lawmaker from Gazipur-2 constituency.

An emergency meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) yesterday evening took the decision to enforce the shutdown, blaming the 'government high ups' for the killing. The meeting was held at AL's Dhanmondi office with acting party chief Abdus Samad Azad in the chair.

The pourashabhas where elections are scheduled for tomorrow will remain out of the purview of hartal.

Briefing newsmen, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said, "The killing of Ahsanullah Master while he was leading a pro-hartal procession in the city and that was also a bid to kill him."

He said on February 12, police attacked Ahsanullah Master while he was leading a pro-hartal procession in the city and that was also a bid to kill him.

The meeting also decided to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## President, PM shocked

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have expressed deep shock at the killing of Awami League lawmaker and Jatiya Sramik League President Ahsanullah Master.

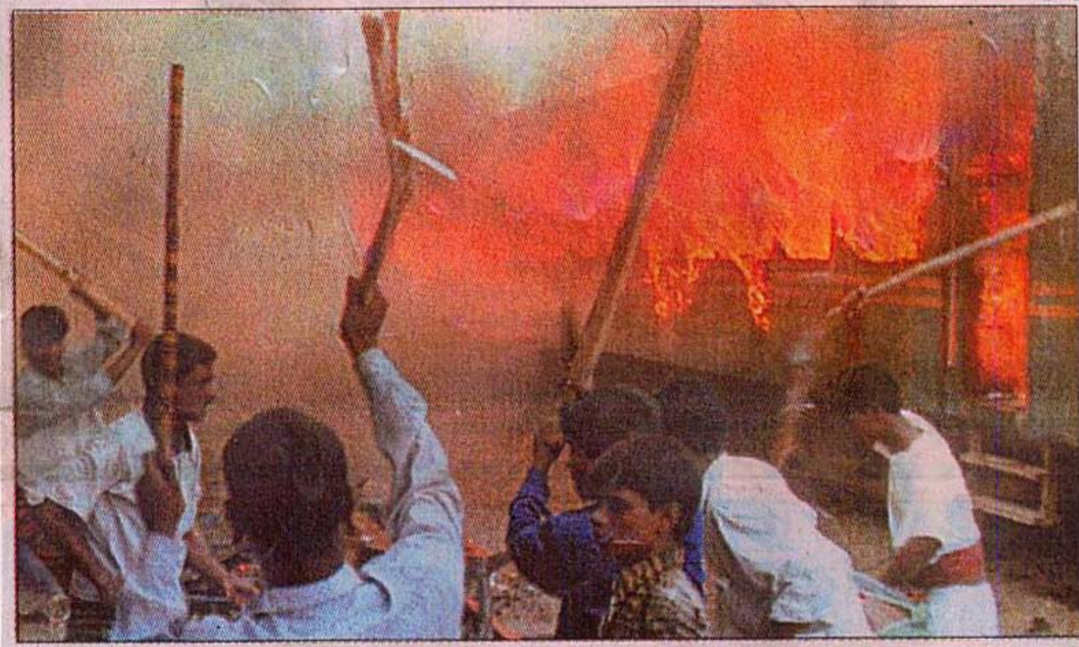
The president recalled Ahsanullah's contributions to establishing parliamentary democracy in the country.

He prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has expressed deep shock at the killing of Ahsanullah Master. She also directed the authorities concerned to ensure a proper investigation into the killing to identify the culprits involved.

The prime minister conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Angry Awami League (AL) supporters in Tongi set fire to a train, left, a bus, middle, and the office of Tongi Jubo Dal, right, after unnamed gunmen killed AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master at a rally in his hometown yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Two alleged smugglers shot dead by BSF

UNB, Benapole

Two alleged smugglers were gunned down by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Benapole border Thursday night.

Sources said both Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and BSF reinforced their strength along the border following the killing.

BDR said the BSF personnel shot dead two unidentified smugglers at zero point of the border opposite to Banbitala ground of Raghunathpur village while they were crossing the barbed wire fence to enter Bangladesh territory along with contraband goods from India.

BSF men took away the bodies. When contacted, a BDR official said the two were smugglers, but an investigation was on to determine which country they belonged to.

# Tongi lurches into virtual battlefield

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tongi exploded into outrage at the killing of Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master, with opposition workers taking to streets, torching a train, uprooting rail tracks, vandalising shops and smashing cars before setting them afire.

The hometown of Master lurches into a virtual battlefield, as armed demonstrators and police exchanged fire, leaving two youths dead and another injured at NATUN BAZAR, not far from Noagaon MA Aziz Mia High School where the AL leader was killed.

Witnesses said 30-year-old Afaz Uddin, a worker of a textiles factory, was killed on the rooftop of a one-storey building and a youth, Hanif,

died in crossfire in Natun Bazar at 5:15pm.

Several hundred demonstrators from Tongi damaged the country retreat at Banashri of Giasuddin Al Mamun, a friend of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman, prompting police to impose Section 144 there.

They blocked Mymensingh Road and the railway through Tongi, snapping train service from Dhaka to other districts until 10:00pm. They uprooted rail tracks and burnt tree trunks and tyres on roads.

Hundreds of police and paramilitary BDR personnel made futile attempts to quell the tempers of the protesters. Section 144 was imposed in Tongi in the afternoon.

VIOLENCE UNFOLDS

With the news of the killing of their leader spreading fast, hundreds of supporters moved out into the streets with iron rods and sticks in hand. A mob tore down wayside bus counters before they set them afire.

Protesters also torched three offices of Tongi unit of the ruling BNP and its front organisations and some shops.

Arsonists with apparent ties to the AL burnt 10 buses of City Service in Joydevpur and one in Tongi. They also damaged more than 100 other vehicles in Gazipur and Dhaka.

A 15-year-old girl, Shamsunnahar, suffered pellet wounds in crossfire as police fired from shotguns in the rail station area

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## Anti-graft body to function in a month: Saifur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission will start functioning within a month, said Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday.

While talking to the newsmen yesterday at his Gulshan residence, Saifur said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia may announce formation of the commission at the inaugural ceremony of the Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) today.

Referring to the Anti-Corruption Commission Bill 2004, he said that a selection committee, yet to be formed, will work towards naming the chairman and members of the commission.

The law also states that the immediate past cabinet secretary would

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

# BDF meet opens today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) meeting opens in Dhaka today to review the pledges the government made at the past two BDF meets.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the meet at the Sonargaon Hotel in the morning to be attended by delegates from 32 countries and donor agencies.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, World Bank Vice-President (South Asia Region) Pratul C Patel and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Representative Nissanke Weerasinghe will also speak at the inauguration.

Corruption, confrontational politics, lack of governance and law and order downside may move front and centre in the discussion, as hinted by donor representatives.

The Local Consultative Group (LCG), a platform of local donors,

said law and order downside coupled with recent escalation in political violence has left a negative impact on Bangladesh as a trading partner and investment location.

Seven sessions to be held in the next two days will also discuss policy and programmes to deliver the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and Millennium Development Goals, good governance, government-NGO partnership, health and education, trade and investment climate, infrastructure for growth and development and aid governance.

The LCG has prepared seven discussion notes on themes of the sessions.

The donors have expressed satisfaction with economic development. They said economic growth continues to pick up, GDP growth increased from 4.4 percent in 2002 to 5.3 percent in 2003. They also anticipated that 5.5 percent growth

projected for 2004 is likely to be achieved.

The donors also expressed satisfaction over foreign reserves, exports and inward remittances -- the three economic indicators that show a powerful comeback.

On the growth in the banking sector, the donors said it also progressed and was on track despite small problems.

But some commitments to governance reform the government made to the donors at the BDF meetings in 2002 and 2003 remain unfulfilled, according to the discussion notes of the donors.

A table prepared by the LCG shows the government fell short of delivering promises on reforming political process, the judiciary and the public administration and ensuring transparency and accountability.

This year, 29 ministers and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

অধিক স্বাস্থ্যসমত, অধিক সুরক্ষা... মোনালিসা আমার কথা, আপনার কথা

## বসুন্ধরা পরিবারের নতুন পণ্য



স্যানিটারী ন্যাপকিন

বসুন্ধরা টিস্যুর বিপুল সাফল্যের পর বসুন্ধরা পরিবারের নতুন সংযোজন "মোনালিসা" স্যানিটারী ন্যাপকিন। জার্মানীর কারিগরী সহায়তায় অত্যাধুনিক মেশিনে কোন ধরনের হাতের স্পর্শ ছাড়াই ইউরোপের উৎকৃষ্ট মানের কাঁচামাল দিয়ে তৈরি আন্তর্জাতিক মানসম্পন্ন "মোনালিসা" স্যানিটারী ন্যাপকিন ১০০% জীবাণুমুক্ত ও নিরাপদ। বৃহৎ এই মিলটির উৎপাদিত পণ্য বাংলাদেশের সম্পূর্ণ চাহিদা মিটিয়ে বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন দেশে রপ্তানী হচ্ছে।

btl বসুন্ধরা টিস্যু ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিমিটেড

সেলস এন্ড মার্কেটিং অফিস

ক-২৪/১, কুড়িল, বসুন্ধরা মেইন রোড, বসুন্ধরা, ঢাকা-১২১২, ফোনঃ ৮৮১৬৬৫৬  
মোবাইলঃ ০১১-৮০১১৯২, ০১৭১-৪২৮১৬৯, ০১৭১-৪২৮১৭০, ফ্যাক্সঃ ৮৮১৬৬৫৬



১২ ধরনের মোনালিসা স্যানিটারী ন্যাপকিন থেকে আপনার পছন্দেরটি বেছে নিন

বসুন্ধরা গ্রুপ

বসুন্ধরা কর্পোরেশন অফিসঃ ১৩/৪/১, পাছপা, ঢাকা-১২০৫ (সেলেসঃ ১১ হইতে ১৯)  
ফোনঃ ৮১৫০২৫-৩৪, ফ্যাক্সঃ ৯১২৩১১, ই-মেইলঃ bgc@bdcom.com