

Chechen president killed in bomb attack

REUTERS, Moscow
A bomb at a packed stadium has killed Chechnya's Moscow-backed president Akhmad Kadyrov and at least 13 other people, dealing a huge blow to President Vladimir Putin's efforts to stamp out rebellion there.

The commander of Russian forces in the region was among many others injured by the assassination, apparently concealed in the stadium's structure, at annual celebrations marking Moscow's 1945 victory over Nazi Germany.

"Kadyrov passed away on May 9 on the day of our national holiday," Putin was quoted yesterday by the Kremlin as saying after meeting the official's son, Ramzan.

Valery Baranov, commander of Russian forces in the region, underwent surgery for serious wounds at a military hospital.

There were scenes of pandemonium at the "Dinamo" stadium around in panic and smoke rising from the

wreckage of the stands.

Television showed a man carrying a young boy, unconscious and bleeding from the mouth, down the terraces. Another old man, blood pouring through a bandage on his head, was being helped away by two men.

Reports said about 20 people were wounded.

"The bomb was placed inside a concrete part of the stadium," said Khamid Kadayev, Chechnya's deputy interior minister, speaking on television from the scene of the blast.

He said this was why the bomb had not been detected on Saturday night and yesterday morning when the stadium was swept by security officials before Victory Day celebrations.

Television reports suggested the bomb may have been planted in the stadium during reconstruction work over the past three months.

Itar-Tass news agency quoted an interior ministry spokesman as

saying five people had been detained in connection with the attack. It gave no details.

Kadyrov, bearded and thickset, once called on Chechnya's Muslims to fight a jihad (holy war) against the Russian army but he later made his peace with Moscow and is now viewed by Chechen rebels as a traitor.

BLAST TARGETED VIP AREA

The attack on the stadium at what would have been a high-security event, celebrating a major occasion in Russian history, dealt an enormous blow to Putin's efforts to restore order in the north Caucasus region.

Putin, who has several times declared the war in Chechnya to be effectively over, has made his headline policy in the region a key part of his domestic policy. He told World War Two veterans after the

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SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Cancer machine gathers dust

Thousands of patients go without proper treatment at DMCH

NAIMUL HAQ

Three pieces of expensive medical equipment for cancer treatment worth over Tk 5.6 crore are gathering dust for more than five years at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

For reasons unknown, these precision instruments, considered vital for accurately locating and treating cancerous tissues, were never used since their installation and have been left uncared for in pathetic conditions at the country's premier public hospital.

Official sources said at least 2,500 patients, who could have been partially or completely cured with the help of these instruments, are denied treatment every month due to non-availability of these machines.

The Tk 3 crore radiotherapy simulator and the Tk 2 crore brachytherapy machine (called Cobalt 60 after loading brachytherapy) used worldwide to treat cancer in advanced stage were delivered to the hospital in June 1998.

Abdul Aziz, chief executive of Mardel Agencies that supplied the two Chinese machines, said the company could produce papers certifying that the DMCH authorities received the machines in good working conditions. Doctors and technicians at the hospital also said the machines had been put through test runs before being handed over.

These two machines along with a German-made computer planner

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



A Tk 3.2 crore simulator machine at Dhaka Medical College Hospital radiotherapy department lies unused while cancer patients suffer for lack of proper treatment.

MUNICIPAL POLLS 2 killed, scores hurt in troubled 4th lap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police fire to quell trouble killed two people and injured many others in Nandail and violence and rigging marred at least five of 14 municipalities up for grab in the fourth lap of multi-stage municipal polls yesterday.

False voting, polling booth capture, snatching of ballot papers and use of undue influence overshadowed polls in Bogra, Nandail, Habiganj, Kurigram and Jessore municipalities, witnesses said.

They said Abu Taher, 40, of Jhaogaon and Sujon, 25, of Achargaon villages suffered fatal injuries during trouble at Achargaon High School centre at about 3:00pm.

UNB adds: The trouble broke out when a woman voter was barred from casting vote, sparking a quarrel between a group of supporters of a chairman candidate and the police.

As an angry mob tried to attack police, the law-enforcers opened fire, resulting in the deaths.

Our Bogra Correspondent adds: Voters in Bogra alleged use of illegal

influence against local BNP lawmaker Helaluzzaman Talukder Latu, who, they said, visited polling centres with a wireless set and ran 'illegal operations' from there.

He influenced the police administration to free the people arrested for casting false votes, they alleged.

Witnesses also alleged false voting in 34 centres in Bogra municipality for BNP-backed chairman candidate AKM Mahbubur Rahman, president of the district BNP.

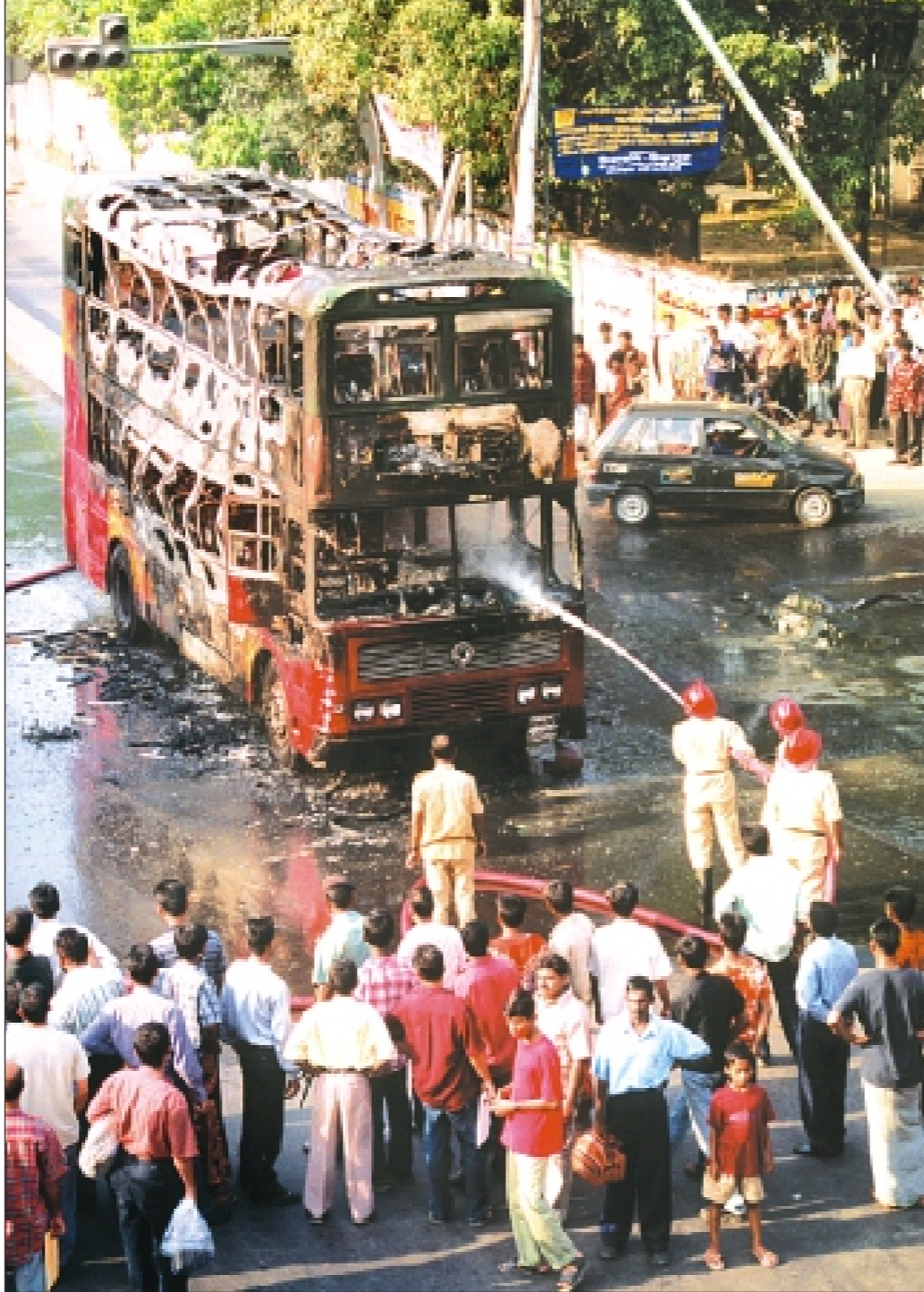
Local deputy commissioner and superintendent of police admitted the false voting to journalists.

Polling was postponed for one hour at Malatinagar government primary school amid widespread false voting.

Three candidates, including one backed by the main opposition Awami League, demanded postponement of polling at the centre, but the polling officials turned down the appeal.

Witnesses said police picked up Abdul Kader allegedly for casting false vote, but released him at the intervention of the lawmaker.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Firefighters spray water on a double-decker set afire by pickets during hartal at Banani yesterday.

Kibria slams Saifur's remarks at BDF meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday slammed Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman for his remarks on the opposition's role at Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) meeting on Saturday.

In a statement, the former finance minister termed the statement of Saifur 'baseless', 'objectionable' and 'indecent'.

"The main opposition Awami League and other political parties have been forced to launch an out-governments movement due to deteriorating law and order situation, reckless corruption at the highest level of government and politicisation of administration," the statement said.

Kibria said the killing of an

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Gallows ready for Ershad Shikder tonight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna jail authorities have completed preparations to send notorious criminal Ershad Shikder to the gallows at 60 seconds past midnight tonight.

Ershad Shikder will be hanged till death at 12:01am for murdering Khalid Hossain, a Jubo League leader on May 16, 1999 at Skidghat under Khulna Police Station.

Three hangmen earlier brought from Dhaka Central Jail will be given the final brief this morning, said Jailer Farman Ali. The hangmen who have been lodged in three separate condemned cells were wearing

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

6 die, 29 hurt as truck rams into bus in Sreenagar

UNB, Munshiganj

Six people were killed and 29 injured when a truck and a bus collided in a deadly accident on Dhaka-Mawa road in Sreenagar yesterday morning.

Witnesses and police said a fish-laden truck bound for Dhaka rammed into a bus coming from the opposite direction near Haghata bus stand at 7:45am, killing four on the spot and injuring 31.

The injured were admitted to hospitals where two others died from their wounds.

The dead are Ali Hossain, 55, Shawkat Ali, 54, Abed Ali, 25, Azizul Huq, 30, Aziz Dewan, 50, and Ramkrishna Rama, 50.

"All five on board the truck were killed in the accident as the truck turned turtle after the violent head-on collision," says a spot report.

Traffic movement on the road remained disrupted for quite some time following the accident.

7 Iraqis killed in market blast

REUTERS, Baghdad

An explosion at a crowded market in Baghdad yesterday killed at least seven Iraqis, including three policemen, and wounded 13.

Eisewhere, Shia Mehdi Army militiamen clashed with US troops in the capital and in the holy city of Najaf to the south and also engaged in sporadic fighting with the British in Basra, where three soldiers were wounded in a grenade attack.

In Mosul, a US soldier was killed and another wounded Saturday in a mortar attack on the coalition base, the US army announced yesterday.

The army said the wounded soldier had been evacuated to the military hospital in Mosul.

US troops have been regularly targeted by insurgents in and around the predominantly Sunni Muslim city, 370 km north of Baghdad, where deposed president Saddam Hussein remains popular.

In the United States, where the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Hasina to cut short US visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in parliament and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina is likely to return home on May 12 or 13 cutting short her 10-day visit to the United States.

Hasina was to return on May 16 but she cut short her programmes in America following the assassination of her party lawmaker Ahsanullah

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Prayer Timings		
May 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-34	6-38
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

India in close poll race to finish line

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India goes to the final lap of its long-drawn parliamentary elections today amid tight security, as major contenders, ruling BJP-led alliance and main opposition Congress, wait for official results with bated breath and scout for allies to cobble a coalition government.

The din and bustle of more than two months of electioneering characterised often by mudslinging came to a close and political parties across the country made their final pitch.

With polling for 361 of the 543 constituencies over in the first four phases, an estimated 215 million voters are expected to exercise their franchise in 182 constituencies in the last round bringing the curtains down on the world's biggest democratic exercise that began on April

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

6 PCJSS men abducted in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Armed criminals abducted six activists of Parbatya Chhatragram Jono Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) from Borkol and Naniarchar upazila of Rangamati on Thursday and Friday.

Locals said 30 armed cadres allegedly belonging to the anti peace treaty United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) drove to Digholchhari village Friday midnight and looked for rival PCJSS supporters.

The gang picked up Bono Bihari Chakma, 40, Sadhan Chandra Chakma, 36, Ranjan Kumar Chakma, 34, and Mongol Kanti Chakma at gunpoint, locals added.

The gang also kidnapped primary

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8