

HC asks govt to explain

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come up with the explanations in a week.

The court order came in response to a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Tobarak Hossain who challenged the provision empowering the police to requisition vehicles.

Under the law, police serve notice on people saying they need their vehicles in the public interest.

Tobarak in the petition said Daud served such a notice on his driver on Tuesday, but as the driver refused to give the vehicle arguing that it was also requisitioned in June, the sergeant snatched his driving licence and other documents.

Tobarak also said police served a backdated notice signed on August 8. The court postponed the notice and demanded explanation why it should not be declared without lawful authority.

It directed the police to return the driving licence and other documents immediately.

Barrister Shafique Ahmed, counsel of the petitioner, said the police were making discriminatory use of the provision: requisitioning one's vehicle several times, but overlooking others.

The provision is against the equal rights of everyone and the right to enjoy one's property, he argued.

Jerusalem car bomb

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combing the area between Qalandiya and A-Ram checkpoints on a main road between Jerusalem and the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Palestinian medics in Ramallah said two Palestinians were killed and nine wounded, including a boy in critical condition. Israeli medics said seven Israelis were wounded.

Palestinian militants have carried out dozens of suicide attacks and car bombings against Israelis during a revolt launched almost four years ago in the West Bank and Gaza, territories Israel occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.

In pre-dawn violence in the Gaza Strip, an Israeli helicopter fired a missile into the Khan Younis refugee camp, wounding 15 people as gunmen confronted an Israeli force demolishing Palestinian homes near a Jewish settlement.

Violence has surged in Gaza as militants seek to portray Israel's plan to evacuate Jewish settlers from occupied territory next year as a victory, while Israel is determined to prevent that by smashing Palestinian armed factions first.

An Israeli military source said the army was carrying out an operation against Palestinian militants in Khan Younis and the helicopter had fired at an "open area" to repulse armed men.

Palestinian medics said most of the wounded were civilians, including two children and a woman. At least one gunman was among the casualties. One person was in critical condition.

Palestinian witnesses later said ground forces operating in the area had pulled back, leaving a string of demolished buildings in their wake.

The Israeli unit -- comprising 10 tanks, armoured personnel carriers and bulldozers -- withdrew from the camp after daybreak, military sources con-

men were wounded in clashes with Sadr militiamen, a doctor said.

Mehdi Army forces, armed with Kalashnikovs and rocket-propelled grenades, fought with Iraqi National Guard and police as US planes flew overhead.

There were also clashes outside a local government building in western Kut.

Spokesman Majid Hameed said a written death threat had been delivered to the province's governor because he had refused to bow to demands from Sadr supporters that Kut secede from Iraq with other Shiite provinces of the south and centre.

Meanwhile four Iraqis were killed and 10 wounded yesterday when a device exploded in a popular marketplace in Khan Beni Sadi, northeast of Baghdad, the health ministry said.

"At the moment we know that four people were killed and 10 injured," said May Abdul Karim, a spokesman for the health ministry, adding that paramedics were still collecting the wounded from the scene.

He said only that a makeshift bomb exploded in the marketplace in Khan Beni Sadi, north of Baghdad on the way to the flashpoint city of Baquba, where the main Christian cemeteries for the capital are located.

Four dead, one hurt

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death by a scrap metal shop owner at Chowdhurypara.

"The unknown shop owner punched Saiful mercilessly when he stole a bottle from the shop at around 1:45pm", claimed Shamsul, the victim's father, quoting a witness.

Finding Saiful unconscious, his father rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Unknown assailants strangled a mobile phone trader and dumped his body on Airport Road in Tejgaon on Tuesday night.

Witnesses said unknown people dropped the body of Ibrahim Khalil Ripon, 32, from a CNG-run three-wheeler at Elenbari at 10:45pm. Blood was oozing out of his nose, ear and mouth, police said.

Police took Ibrahim, a mobile phone shop owner at Kabyakos Market in Karwan Bazar, to DMCH, where doctors pronounced him dead. The victim's mother Mosammad

Kaituri suspected Ibrahim's wife Shahera's hand in the killing.

Police arrested Shahera and two other suspects after the victim's mother filed a case with Tejgaon Police Station.

Pallabi police recovered the bullet-riddled body of an unidentified man, aged around 22, from the front of a house in Block-A at around 11:00pm Tuesday.

Police rushed the man with head and throat wounds to DMCH for an autopsy.

The man was clad in black trousers and a printed shirt.

In Kafur, a mob seized a young man with a firearm and three bullets and beat him mercilessly.

Police said locals caught Mohammad Jakir, 30, when he allegedly attempted to shoot one Asaduzzaman Hashu at around 9:30am.

Jakir was admitted to DMCH after suffering injuries from the mob beating.

Cops kill N'ganj

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were hidden at Nayamati in Pitalipul. A police team along with Rekmart went to Pitalipul reportedly in search of the cache.

"Saying he was going to show us the hidey-hole of arms, Rekmart got out of the police van and tried to run away." Police pumped four bullets into his stomach, thigh and personal parts killing him on the spot.

Locals alarmed by the gunshots rushed to the scene and found the terror dead.

LOCALS' REACTION

As the news of the killing spread in the locality, thousands gathered to see the body of the dreaded killer. Many spat, some kicked and threw shoes at it while many wept remembering their relatives killed by Rekmart and his pack. The locals also brought out a procession celebrating the end of a fright.

CRIMINAL RECORDS
Police has so far found 41 cases against Rekmart filed with Siddhirganj and Fatulla police stations including 20 for murder since 1996.

He allegedly killed Israfil in 1997, Dayal in 1999 and Karim, Ujjal and Gool Hossain on different occasions in front of hundreds of people in Nayamati area.

Raid at Ctg

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Association (BJA), Chittagong unit and also a leader of Sitakunda Awami League, owns the shop. However, he was not present during the raid, sources added.

The arrestees claimed that the seized jewellery were mortgaged assets but failed to provide the names or addresses of the persons concerned, Rab sources said.

Dilip Bhadra, a leader of the BJA's Chittagong chapter, told The Daily Star that Ramkrishna's family runs jewellery business in the British era.

"Ramkrishna inherited the business from his father late Surendra Mahajan and their family owns two more jewellery shops at Terry Bazar and BM Super Market in the city," he added.

PM urges NGOs

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Dhaka City at her office, the prime minister directed the authorities concerned to rebuild roads, footpaths and drainage system ravaged by floods in the capital.

She also directed to ensure proper utility services to the city-dwellers, remove illegal sheds and establishments along the city roads and pavements.

While outlining the immediate tasks of the post-flood rehabilitation programme to the NGO leaders, Khaleda said there should be proper coordination of activities between the government and the NGOs at upazila, district and national levels. Both the government and the NGOs, she said, would need to know each other's programme.

She said coordination should be made in such a way so that no flood-affected person was left outside the rehabilitation programme.

The prime minister said both the government and the NGOs should ensure their presence and help the affected people.

She informed them of the government measures for revitalising the agricultural sector through launching agricultural rehabilitation programme. She said the government was developing seedbeds for helping the farmers, and added, if necessary, seeds would be imported.

The prime minister urged the NGOs to extend their help to the government's efforts to develop a lasting flood control system in the country.

During the meeting, the FNB leaders apprised the prime minister of their activities to mitigate the sufferings of the people affected during the deluge.

The FNB, which represents 830 NGOs of the country, also informed her about its post-flood rehabilitation programme.

The prime minister thanked the FNB for its activities for the affected people, saying, "they have done well."

While appreciating the government's agricultural rehabilitation programme, the NGO leaders said: "The government is ahead of us (NGO)."

FNB Chairman Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, its advisor Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, and Kamaluddin Akbar, Abdul Kader, Zakir Hossain and M Tajul Islam were present.

Sate Minister for NGO Affairs Lutfur Rahman Khan Azad and Prime Minister's Principal

Secretary Kamal Siddiqui were also present.

US team winds

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It said Dhaka's refusal to send troops to Iraq under a US-led coalition would not influence re-assessment of Bangladesh's status what will continue until mid-September.

The State Department will then pass the re-assessment to the President Bush, who, if dissatisfied, could impose sanctions, including withdrawal of non-trade and non-humanitarian US assistance, by September 30.

The US is yet to slap sanctions on any country for poor response to human trafficking.

JS body asks

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matter of providing facility for gas import through Chittagong Port.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrar Hossain attended the meeting on behalf of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Committee members Sarder Sakhawat Hossain Bakul, Md Samsuzzoha Khan, Md Nazim Uddin Alam, M Elias Ali and Md Habibul Islam Habib, Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary Nazrul Islam and officials concerned were present.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia talks to representatives of the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh at her office in Dhaka yesterday.

Plan to float shares

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The Meghna Daudkandi Bridge and Bangladesh UK Friendship Bridge in Bhairab will also come under securitising project, the sources added.

Some mega projects like the eastern by-pass road in Dhaka, Padma Bridge and fourth Karnaphuli Bridge in Chittagong will be implemented by the funds raised through the projects.

"It is high time now to work for alternative funds to build major infrastructure in future," said Communications Minister Nazmul Huda. He said railways and major hospitals may also come under such projects.

According to the concept, a certain portion of the toll collection of the JMB will be leased out for 20-25 years to a particular investor who will float the

share in the capital markets. Around Tk 500 crore may be available from the JMB project.

Communications ministry sources said the Ministry of Finance has already okayed the project and the proposal for securitizing the JMB will be submitted to the prime minister soon.

Representatives from the Bangladesh Bank, WB, economic relation division and finance ministry attended the meet at the conference room of the communications ministry.

They told the meeting that many countries raise funds through securitization. Bahrain Monetary Agency is raising \$250 million and the Corporation of Madurai Tamil Nadu raised Rs 300 million through securitization for concerned projects.

Body to probe

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Professor Mir Mahbubul Alam, head of surgery department of Osmani hospital, heads the probe body, which also includes Prof Partho Sarathi Shome, head of orthopaedics department, Prof Sadr Hossain, head of neurosurgery department, and Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed, head of anaesthesia department.

However, Dr Helal requested Brigadier General Ismail Hossain, director of the hospital, to drop him from the probe committee citing personal reasons, sources said.

Ismael told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon that the revised three-member probe body was asked to submit a report at its earliest.

Ibrahim, wounded in the car bomb explosion near the Gulshan Centre, died the next day at the hospital. After his death, his family claimed the AL leader died from improper treatment.

The three-day remand of AL leader SM Nunu Miah, arrested in connection with the blast incident, ends today.

The killing of Ibrahim came after twin blasts at cinema halls killed a street boy on August 5, underlining security concern in the northeastern city.

The government yesterday tasked the Criminal Investigation Department with investigation into the three incidents.

Sylhet police would produce Nunu before the Court of Sylhet Sadar Magistrate this morning and might seek a fresh remand prayer, said a police official preferring anonymity.

Officials of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence and National Security Intelligence on Tuesday afternoon quizzed the physicians, who treated Ibrahim.

Leaders of Balaganj and Osmani Nagar units of the ruling BNP at a press conference refuted the allegations of Nunu's wife Nasima Nunu and AL leader Shah Azizur Rahman on Tuesday saying BNP lawmaker Ilias Ali had no hand in the bomb blast.

Protesting the blast, the local arm

of the main opposition brought a mourning procession in the city. Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, Sylhet mayor and Sylhet city AL president, Abdus Shahid, chief whip of the opposition, addressed a brief rally at Shaheed Minar.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina is expected to reach Sylhet today and is scheduled to visit the AL leaders at Osmani hospital, who were injured in the blast.

Militant hunt

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The meeting also discussed a proposal to block the road from state guest house Jamuna to Hotel Sheraton and to block Crescent Road adjacent to Sangsad Bhaban, instead of blocking the roads around Ramna Park leading to Hotel Sheraton.

Saarc security coordinators and Hotel Sheraton authorities are also discussing collaboration on security arrangements at the hotel during the summit.

At the meeting at her office, the prime minister directed the mayor to ensure beautification of the city ahead of the summit and cleanliness of the streets.

She asked the communications minister to take immediate steps to repair major roads and the works minister to renovate key buildings in the city.

The meeting was attended by, among others, Home Secretary Omar Farooq, Foreign Secretary Shamsher M Chowdhury, the BDR chief, Inspector General of Police, Rab chief, and director general of Special Security Force.

UN launches

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The draft was sent to the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) in Geneva Monday. The UN Headquarters in New York has approved it after some minor changes.

The government has earlier assessed the flood damage to be Tk 30,000 to Tk 40,000 crore.

Bomb threat halts

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high alert and delayed flights from Sylhet Osmani International Airport on Tuesday.

Witnesses said the chairmen of the computer science and engineering and microbiology departments suspended classes and students and teachers ran out of their classrooms.

Hundreds of students crowded the entry to the building, with fear writ large on their faces. A student said his classmates hurried out of their classroom on the second floor the moment they were alerted to "four bombs" secreted at the building.

Prof Firoz who filed a general diary with Ramna Police Station described the caller as teenage and quoted him as telling an operator: "Be careful, all of you ... bombs will go off."

Dr Abdul Malek, chairman of the microbiology department, said he and other department staff searched the building and checked students' bags but found nothing. "I asked all students to leave classrooms for safety."

Mohammad Shahidullah, a cleaner, said he and his colleagues checked the building after Chairman of the Computer Science and Engineering Department Dr Hafiz Mohammad

Hasan Babu asked them to do so.

Officer-in-Charge of Ramna Police Station Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star on the scene: "A patrol team will stay back here and watch the situation."

Vice-Chancellor Professor SMA Faiz said the episode might have been designed to spread panic, adding the authorities asked law enforcers to beef up security on the campus.

BOMB SCARE IN SYLHET

Sylhet Government Pilot High School in Kalighat and Shahjalal High School in Islampur received a series of calls threatening to blow up the institutions. A police official said the police went to the schools and ran checks shortly before 3:00pm.

Syed Muhaddis Ahmed, principal of Ambarkhana Girls High School and College in the northeastern city, received a call at about 12:30pm from an unidentified man, who said the school would be blown up in a blast between 12 noon and 12:30pm today.

The caller also threatened the principal with dire consequences if the press was informed about it. The principal filed a general diary with Kotwali Police Station, police officials said.

Iran won't budge on nuke quest

REUTERS, Tehran

Iran declared yesterday that threats to send its nuclear case to the UN Security Council would not make it drop its quest for peaceful nuclear technology.

The statement by President Mohammad Khatami came after US officials expressed growing confidence in recent days that international resolve was hardening to deal with Iran's nuclear program and report it to the United Nations Security Council for possible sanctions.

Iran has angered Britain, Germany and France -- who have sought to broker a diplomatic solution to Tehran's nuclear case -- by re-starting parts of its nuclear program and refusing to abandon efforts to master uranium enrichment.

Washington says Iran wants to enrich uranium to bomb-grade levels. Tehran says it only wants to make low-grade enriched uranium for use in nuclear power reactors.

"We don't want our case to be sent to the United Nations. We hope to resolve the issue through justifications and explanations," Khatami told reporters.

"But if anyone wants to deprive us of our right (to peaceful nuclear technology) we and our nation would be ready to pay the price," he added.

Iran's claim that it has no intention

of building nuclear arms was given a boost on Tuesday by reports that U.N. nuclear inspectors had traced highly-enriched uranium particles found in Iran to equipment bought from Pakistan.

This supports Iran's stance that the uranium samples, including some of bomb-grade level, were caused by contamination.

"We haven't done any enrichment in Iran. The parts were contaminated," Khatami said.

Diplomats in Tehran said Washington would probably push hard to include a trigger mechanism to send Iran's case to the U.N. Security Council in any resolution adopted by the next meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in September.

Dhaka to get

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Department, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board, Water and Sewerage Authority, Dhaka, Titas Gas, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, Dhaka Electric Supply Company and DCC attended the meeting.

The summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation that groups seven South Asian nations is slated for January 9 to 11.

Britain nods to human

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medicine," Newcastle University's Dr Miodrag Stojkovic said in a statement.

The scientists said they plan to duplicate early-stage embryos and extract stem cells from them with the aim of developing new treatments for degenerative diseases.

But they warn it will be at least five years - if not many more - before patients could receive stem cell treatments based on their work.

The embryos will be destroyed before they are 14 days old and will never be allowed to develop beyond a cluster of cells the size of a pinhead.

It is the same technique that was used to create Dolly the cloned sheep.

Even though the science is similar, the technique is different to reproductive cloning, which aims to create a human being.

Cloning to create copies of human babies is outlawed in Britain but therapeutic cloning is legal there since 2002.

The cloning technique, known as cell nuclear replacement (CNR) involves removing the nucleus of a human egg cell and replacing it with the nucleus from a human body cell, such as a skin cell.

The egg is then artificially stimulated. This causes the egg to divide and behave in a similar way to a standard embryo fertilised by sperm.

The eggs used are left over from IVF treatment. They are donated by couples, and would otherwise have been destroyed.

Professor Alison Murdoch of the Newcastle NHS Fertility Centre, who is leading the research said the potential of their research was "immensely exciting".

She added: "Since we submitted our application we have had overwhelming support from senior scientists and clinicians from all over the world and many letters from patients who may benefit from the research."

"This research should give valuable insight into the development of many diseases."

Suzi Leather, chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, said an initial one year research licence had been granted after "careful consideration of all the scientific, ethical, legal and medical aspects of the project".

She said: "This is an important area of research and a responsible use of technology."

"The HFEA is there to make sure any research involving human embryos is scrutinised and properly regulated."

A spokeswoman for the British Medical Association said: "We support strong regulation so that therapeutic cloning to extract embryonic stem cells for life-saving treatment, which most of the public supports, can go ahead while human reproductive cloning, which most of the public opposes, cannot."

Watch on shrines

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January, law enforcers are not allowing our members to arrange any such programmes," said Mohammad Shah Alam, general secretary of Bangladesh Baul Shilpi Samity.

He alleged whenever they sought permission to organise musical programmes at mazaras and localities, police and local authorities turned down their request saying permission would be given only upon their assurance that no incident of bomb explosion would take place.

But the IGP said they have not slapped any embargo on spiritual singers in organising musical programmes or performing songs. "We will investigate and take measures if we get specific information from any one facing such problems," he added.

Leaders of bauls and bayatis said there are around 25,000 shrines across the country. But the spiritual singers are mainly based at big shrines including High Court Mazar Hazrat and Shah Ali's Mazar in Dhaka, Hazrat Shahjalal's shrine and Shah Paran's shrine in Sylhet, Shah Mokhdum's shrine in Rajshahi and Dudu Shah's shrine in Sirajganj.

They said that after 1990, influential locals formed mazar management committees on the plea of checking anti-social activities at the mazaras.

"Earlier, the bauls and bayatis and poor people used to get share of the money and goods given to the mazaras by worshippers, but now the committee members are taking those," a baul leader alleged.

He also alleged anti-social activities are still taking place at many of the shrines but law enforcers take no action due to unknown reasons.