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## Humayun Azad found dead in Munich

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Writer Humayun Azad, grievously injured in February in a knife attack his family blamed on Islamist extremists, was found dead in Munich in Germany on Thursday morning, prompting his relatives to react in disbelief.

"Prof Azad arrived in Germany on August 8 where he intended to do several months of research on romantic German writer Heinrich

Heine," a German Embassy press release says.

"Prof Azad was found dead in his Munich apartment by a member of the German PEN Centre when he did not come to an appointment with the PEN member," the release says.

"An autopsy has indicated that it (Azad's death) was due to heart failure," AFP quoted police spokesman Dieter Groebner as saying in

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Humayun Azad



PHOTO: STAR

Anannya Azad, son, and Latifa Kahinor, wife, of Humayun Azad break down at their Fuller Road home in Dhaka yesterday upon receiving the news of the writer's death in Germany.

### German embassy statement on Prof Azad's death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The German embassy yesterday offered condolences to the bereaved family of Professor Humayun Azad who died in Munich in Germany on Thursday morning.

A press release signed by German Chargé d'affaires in Dhaka Hermann Nicolai says Azad arrived in Germany on August 8, where he intended to do a research on romantic German writer Heinrich Heine. Azad received a scholarship by the German chapter of the International PEN Centre, the International Association of Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists and Novelists.

Doing a research on Heinrich Heine was a long-cherished dream of Azad who had prepared for his stay in Germany since 2003.

Azad was found dead in his Munich apartment by a member of the German PEN Centre when he did not come to an appointment with a PEN member.

"An emergency doctor diagnosed his death. Doctors and police did not find any signs of an unnatural death," the release says.

"Before informing the Bangladesh public the Embassy has informed the family of Prof Azad. The unexpected death... comes as a shock to all who have known him. The Embassy wishes to offer its condolences to his bereaved family, friends and admirers."

### Islamists' attempt to raid Ahmadiyya complex thwarted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna has literally been sitting on a heap of gunpowder until yesterday evening with thousands of frenzied Islamist bigots threatening to pierce through a massive police cordon and destroy Nirala Ahmadiyya mosque complex.

Supporters of International Khatme Nabuwat Movement Bangladesh (IKNMB) were standing face to face with security forces cordoning off the area.

The situation turned most volatile after Shaikhul Hadith Allama Moulana Azizul Huq, chairman of ruling alliance partner Islami Oikyo Jote (IOJ), issued an ultimatum that any more delay in declaring Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims would simply invite fall of the coalition government.

Speaking as the chief guest at a rally of over 30,000 people, Huq said, "The faithful Muslims will crush all Ahmadiyya complexes in the country if adherents of Ahmadiyya Jamaat are not officially declared non-Muslims."

Anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and 10 platoons of riot police were deployed in the area from Moilapota crossroads to Nirala Residential Area to thwart the fanatics' attack.

Security measures were also beefed up at KDA Avenue and Babri

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### JAIL CORRUPTION GALORE

## Jailers pass the buck to prison directorate

Allege headquarters' toll demand compels them to graft

ZAYADUL AHSAN with SHAMIM ASHRAF

Jailers alleged they exact bribes from prisoners and others compelled by a house rule requiring them to come up with a monthly payment for the prison directorate or face punishment transfer.

Besides the 'transfer business', they said, the prison headquarters authorities also embezzle the food rations and medications for the detainees to keep a steady flow of 'extra money' pouring into their pockets.

Most jailers of the country's 66 jails that house over 70,000 prison-

ers, although meant for only 26,000, have been transferred at least twice, some as many as four times, in the last two and a half years since 2002, they claimed.

But Inspector General of Prisons (IPG) Brigadier Zillur Rahman brushed aside the allegations as

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### Extortionists storm office, kill manager

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extortionists gunned down a youth at Elephant Road in Dhanmondi yesterday and police recovered body of an unidentified youth on Thursday night in Uttara.

Selim Sirkar, 30, manager of a group of companies, was working in his 161, Elephant Road office when a gang of seven stormed the office at about 3:00pm.

They fired two shots to his chest and face and fled the scene, said witnesses.

Locals rushed him to Dhaka

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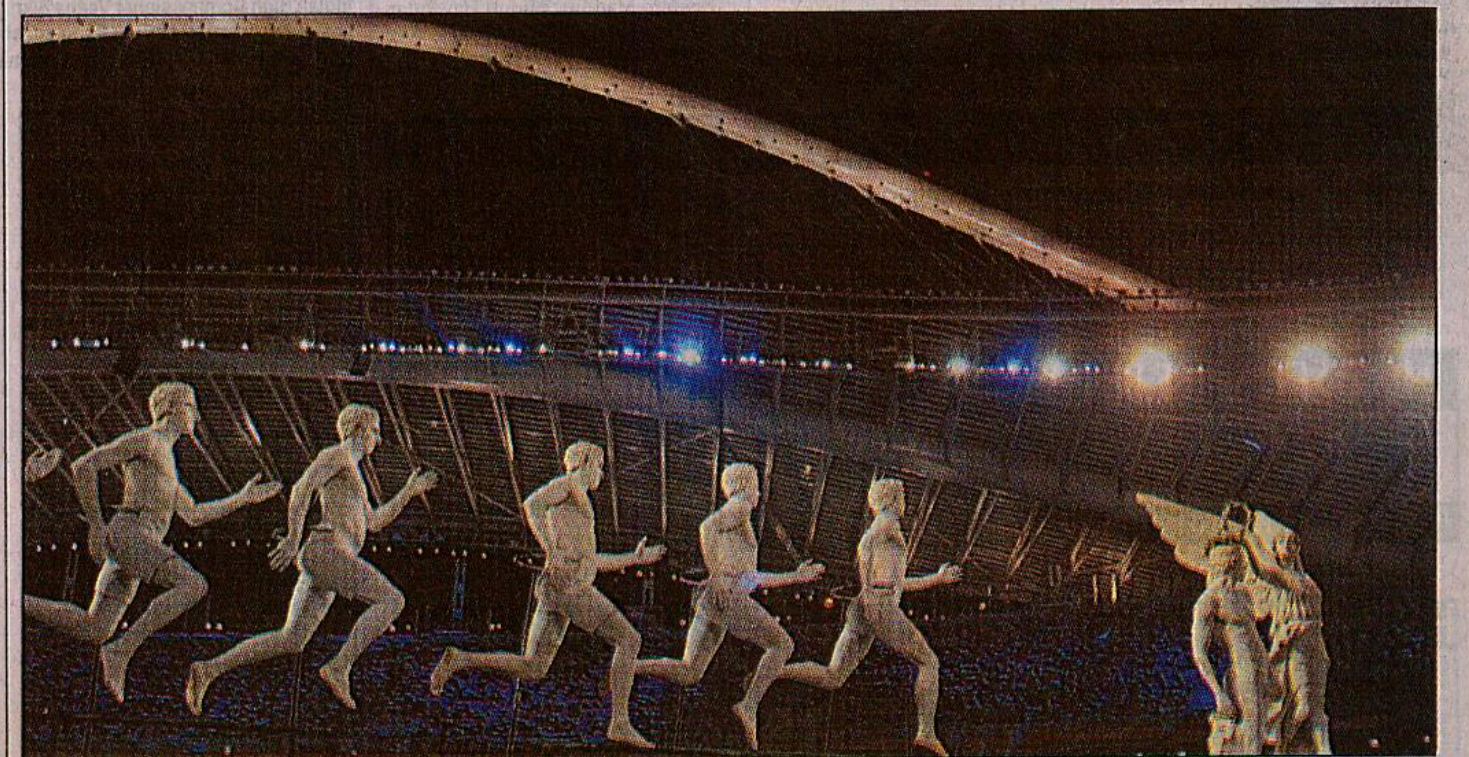


PHOTO: AFP

Dancers perform during the opening ceremony of the 2004 Olympic Games at the Olympic Stadium in Athens yesterday. The opening ceremony marked the start of a 16-day sporting extravaganza that will see around 10,000 athletes from 202 countries take part.

### Sylhet Bomb Blasts Nobody owns the probing

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK, from Sylhet

Mystery shrouds the investigations into the bomb blasts in two movie houses and the grenade attack near an Awami League (AL) meeting venue in Sylhet as police and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) point at each other as responsible for the probing.

Both police and the CID refuse to answer reporters' queries saying they were not investigating the cases.

High police officials said CID Assistant Superintendent Munshi Atique was tasked with the probe, which Atique denied.

"No CID official has yet been given the responsibility," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Admitting that the police

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## Nunu brought to Dhaka for quizzing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police took Awami League (AL) leader Nunu Miah, a suspect of the recent car bomb blast in Sylhet, to Dhaka yesterday for interrogation in the Joint Interrogation Cell.

Interrogators from the Criminal Investigation Department, National Security Intelligence and Special Branch will grill Nunu in the cell after investigators in Sylhet failed to extract any important information from him, a police officer said.

He was remanded again in police custody on Thursday on completion of a three-day remand by Sylhet police.

While leaving the court on the day, Nunu told journalists that police subjected him to beating,

electric shock and other forms of torture in custody in an attempt to extract a confessional statement from him.

The family of Shaokat Ali, an AL leader who suffered critical injuries in the explosion in Gulshan Centre, said he would be sent to Bangkok for better treatment in two or three days.

He was transferred to a private hospital in Dhaka on August 10 from Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

Meanwhile, security fears continued to hobble life in the north-eastern holy city, rich with the memories of Islamic saints, also in the wake of twin cinema blasts, bomb

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## Myths, technology welcome Olympics back home

AP, Athens

The Olympics returned home yesterday to a lavish welcome in an opening ceremony invoking Greek mythology, civilisation and culture and closing an epic circle in sports: from the games' 19th-century rebirth to the latest gathering of the world's greatest athletes in an age beset by fears of terrorism and instability.

At dusk, a countdown video filled the screen at the recently upgraded Olympic Stadium - 28 seconds, one

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### AL to enforce 6-hr hartal tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) enforces a six-hour country-wide hartal tomorrow demanding reinstatement of August 15, the day Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated, as the National Mourning Day.

AL General-Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday told The Daily Star the hartal will be observed from 6 am to 12 noon across the country on August 15.

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## Sadr hurt in raid, asks his men to continue war

AFP, Najaf

Iraqi Shiite militia leader Moqtada Sadr was wounded yesterday as US and Iraqi government forces closed in on his Najaf stronghold, and called on his supporters to continue their "holy war" even if he died a martyr, aides said.

"The injuries are in his chest, legs and arms. He was hurt in an attack while checking one of the fighting battalions," said spokesman Sheikh Ali Sumeisim on the ninth day of the battle in the Shiite pilgrimage city of Najaf.

Sadr pressed his Mehdi Army to "continue the jihad (holy war) even if he dies a martyr," said Sheikh Ahmed al-Shaibani at the Imam Ali shrine, a stronghold of the militia since its spring uprising against the US-led occupation of Iraq.

"His condition is not known yet," added Shaibani, confirming that Sadr was wounded in three places.

Another aide said the cleric was wounded early yesterday.

"It happened at about 7:00 am local time inside the old city," said Alal-Yasseri.

Yet despite his call to arms, the militia leader also said talks to defuse a standoff between his militia and a joint Iraq-US force would



Moqtada Sadr

continue, although they have "achieved no solution" to date, Shaibani added.

Various efforts have been underway to negotiate peace. The government's pointman on security, Muwafaq al-Rubaie, is in Najaf in a bid to meet with Sadr and end the assault.

The Najaf office of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the spiritual leader of Iraq's majority Shiite population, also said it was working with all sides for peace.

In a conflicting report, Reuters from Baghdad adds: Sadr is unhurt

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