

Saifur sees AL rally attack blow to economy

US envoy for thorough probes into all blasts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said Saturday's grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally has dealt a severe blow to the economy, which has been put on a solid footing over the last three years.

Saifur told reporters that the grisly attack has dented Bangladesh's image abroad at a time when foreign direct investment has started flowing in and the country just started recovering from the

loss

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2 more upazilas to be formed

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday decided to create two more new upazilas in Moulvibazar and Comilla districts to strengthen local administration.

The 90th meeting of National Implementation Committee on Administrative Reorganisation (Nicar) took the decision to create the new upazilas named Juri and Monohorganj in Moulvibazar and Comilla districts.

Juri, the 471st upazila of the country, consists of four unions of Kulaura and four unions of Baralekha upazilas while Monohorganj, the 472nd upazila, consists of 11 unions of Laksam upazila.

The 470th upazila of the country named Titas was created in Comilla in the Nicar's 89th meeting held on February 22 this year.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, also the chairperson of Nicar, chaired the meeting at International Conference Centre (ICC). The meeting took a number of decisions.

After the meeting, Cabinet

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Ten N'ganj shops looted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Robbers looted cash and valuables worth about Tk 8 lakh from 10 shops of a Narayanganj co-operative market at Chashara yesterday.

The robbers looted Tk 1.26 lakh in cash and valuables of Tk 6 lakh from the shops at 3:00am, the shopowners claimed.

A gang of eight armed robbers held three night guards of the market hostage at gunpoint and taking the keys of market gates they entered into the keys of guards said.

"The shops sold readymade garments and sarees. Polo Fashion, Mohona Fashion, Modern Fashion, Lily Saree House, Shathi Fabrics are among the burgled ones," they said.

The robbers fled the scene by a pick up van after an hour of robbery, the guards added.

Police however picked up the guards identified as Shamsuddin, 60, Ismael, 55, and Habibullah, 44, for interrogation and the owners of the looted shops are also preparing to file a case.



PHOTO: STAR

Please tell me, he's alive

Safia carries a picture with her husband Bahadur, unsure whether he is dead or alive after Saturday's deadly grenade attacks that killed at least 19 people in Dhaka. Bahadur did not return to their Sabujbagh home nor could Safia identify any of the two unclaimed bodies at Dhaka Medical College morgue because of police resistance.

MPs plan to impeach Blair over Iraq war

AFP, London

bid were to be announced at a press conference in London later Thursday.

With Blair's own Labour party enjoying a healthy majority in the Commons, the motion is unlikely to pass, but it would force the prime minister to submit to a fresh debate on why he joined the US-led offensive on Iraq.

One of the MPs behind the motion, Boris Johnson of the main opposition Conservative party, said it would "at least force Blair to come clean and say why he felt it was necessary to be so reckless with the truth".

"It is not so much that he lied; it is rather that he used all his lawyerly Sadiq's regime collapsed.

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Move to coax trade bodies to rally round govt fails

STAR REPORT

A move of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) to rally the business community behind the government in the current volatile political situation appears to have stumbled as it failed to persuade key business leaders to attend a meeting with the prime minister yesterday.

Sources said the BNP-leaning FBCCI leadership sought more time to lead a business team comprising chairs of the country's major trade bodies to a meeting with the PM apparently to strike a balance with the business leaders' visit to the opposition leader a day after the August-21 grenade attack.

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo and other directors yesterday met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and discussed the country's current SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

AFP, Melbourne

An Australian inventor claims to have made the world's first commercially-viable motor vehicle powered by compressed air.

The vehicle is being trialed by contractors in Melbourne's parks and gardens over the next 12 months as an alternative to conventional diesel or petrol engines.

The engine's designer, Angelo Di Pietro from Melbourne company Engineair, said the engine produced no pollutants and had only two moving parts, increasing its efficiency over conventional designs.

Di Pietro said it used compressed air to drive a rotary engine, abandoning the pistons and cylinders seen in regular designs.

The vehicle being tested in Melbourne has reached 50 kilometres an hour (31 miles

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AIR-POWERED MOTOR VEHICLE A REALITY NOW



Operations Manager Paul Grimes of City-Wide inspects the mechanics of a prototype vehicle with a revolutionary rotary engine powered by air in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday.

74 killed in Kufa violence

Sistani-Sadr talks begin, crowd breaks Najaf shrine siege

AFP, Najaf

Talks have started between representatives of rebel cleric Moqtada Sadr and Iraq's Shia spiritual leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani in Najaf, a spokesman for Sistani said yesterday.

"We have started contacts with Moqtada Sadr and in the coming weeks we are waiting, hoping that we will succeed in saving the city from destruction," said Ahmed al-Khaffaf.

The format of the talks was not clear or whether Sistani and Sadr themselves had or were expected to meet face-to-face.

"Once again I'm calling upon people wanting to enter Najaf to stay where you are if possible," Khaffaf added.

"Demonstrators outside Najaf will only be admitted to the city after they have been searched," he finished.

Iraq's Shia spiritual leader Grand

Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani arrived in Najaf yesterday as a huge crowd forced their way into the city's holy shrine calling for peace in the city.

A 24-hour ceasefire began immediately upon his arrival on the orders of Prime Minister Iyad Allawi -- although the local governor said hostilities would resume if a solution to the standoff against Shia militia was not found by then.

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Nazrul's death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nation today observes the 28th death anniversary of Kazi Nazrul Islam, the national poet of Bangladesh.

Different socio-cultural organisations have chalked out programmes to pay homage to the versatile poet.

Dhaka University (DU) authorities have taken up elaborate programmes to mark the death anniversary. The DU teachers, students and employees led by its Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz will gather at the foot of Aparajeo Bangla on the campus at 6:45am today. They will place wreath at the grave of the poet beside the university mosque at 7:00am.

Later, they will offer fateha and hold a discussion on the mazar premises. Qurankhwani will also be held at the university mosque after Fazr prayers.

Bangla Academy will also lay wreath at the poet's grave in the morning.

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will hold a discussion and cultural programme at its building at 5:00pm to mark the day.

Nazrul Academy has arranged a discussion meeting at its building in

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CID lacks explosion investigation ability

Only 3 inspectors have little training; department has no sophisticated equipment

SHARIF ISLAM

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the only agency in police department to deal with bomb blast incidents, has little capability to deal with post-blast situation and carry out investigation as it lacks trained manpower and sophisticated equipment for the job.

In case of need, only three CID inspectors who had a mere 15-day

training in US on post-blast situation are withdrawn from their regular duties and given the task to ascertain the nature of the explosives, bullets and splinters, CID sources said.

"When any such incident (bomb blast) takes place, we look at each other helplessly as we do not have the expertise and equipment to probe it," said a top CID officer seeking anonymity.

"We only have kits to take finger-



The Ahmadiyya headquarters in Bakshibazar remains unguarded yesterday, although a group of religious fanatics vowed to capture the mosque there today.

Bigots to capture Ahmadiyya mosque today

Civil society vows to resist, Babar promises safety

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka is bracing for a probable confrontation, as religious fanatics march today to capture the Ahmadiyya headquarters in Bakshibazar and the civil society gathers there to resist the bigots.

Amnesty International, expressing concern about the safety of people in a press release posted on its website on August 24, said the Ahmadiyya religious community has been the target of a hate campaign by Islamist groups.

Different groups of anti-Ahmadiyya fanatics led by Aamra Dhakabashi, a city-based cultural organisation-turned-Islamist outfit, vowed to say Friday prayers in the Ahmadiyya mosque there and replace its signboard.

"We will say our prayers there

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Qulkhwani of Ivy today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Awami League (AL) Women's Affairs Secretary Ivy Rahman will be held at her Gulshan residence today after Asr prayers.

People from all walks of life have been requested to attend the qul on time at 22 Ivy Concord, Road No. 108 in Gulshan.

Ivy died in the early hours on Tuesday at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) after fighting for life for three days since Saturday's ghastly grenade attack on the AL rally that blew off both her legs.

Different political, social and cultural organisations and politicians continued to express deep shock at her death.

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus

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Prayer Timing		
August 27		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-05
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-33	6-36
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation