

# Ahmadiyya complex

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Urdu Road Dhal Mosque, Shahidnagar Jam-e-Mosque and Kamrangirchar Madrasa.

The fanatics, after the Juma prayers, tried to gather at Azad Field, but police chased them away.

Failing to organise its people, Aamra Dhakabashi formally 'post-poned' their capture bid in the afternoon.

"We've decided to postpone the programme, not to drop it," said Belayet Hossain al-Firoji, joint secretary general of the organisation, quoting the decision of an emergency meeting of the organisation held at Moulaivabazar Jam-e-Mosque.

"We'll announce a fresh schedule after our leaders are freed, but be sure, we'll go to Bakshibazar and hold our programme," he told The Daily Star.

Some 100 Ahmadiyya youths took position inside the complex on Thursday evening and let in people only after frisking them.

All leaders of the sect, some of them with their families, went to the complex yesterday morning to protect it.

Leaders and activists of the South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism (SAPUFC), which called for civil society resistance to the fanatics' move, and of main opposition Awami League and left-leaning 11-party alliance went to Bakshibazar in procession at 12:30pm, but police intercepted them near the complex.

Police allowed some of their representatives to the Ahmadiyya complex

where they joined the community leaders.

Thanking the civil society leaders for their role, Ahmadiyya Nayebe Amir Meer Mobashwer Ali said, "The secular people of Bangladesh possess a strong power and the dream that attended Bangladesh's birth will come true if they join hands to this end."

The SAPUFC, AL and 11-party leaders and activists earlier gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar and held a rally with SAPUFC President Prof Kabir Chowdhury in the chair.

"We will soon form a platform of pro-Liberation, secular, non-communal and progressive people to resist fundamentalist threats anywhere in Bangladesh," Prof Chowdhury said. "Only an united people can stop the extremist and fundamentalist forces who are getting stronger across the country alarmingly."

Justice KM Sobhan, Prof Ajay Roy, Asaduzzaman Noor, MP, Monjurul Ahsan Khan, Rashed Khan Menon, Prof Muntassir Mamoon, Prof Hayat Mamud, Hasanul Haq Inu, Khalequzzaman, MM Akash, Kajal Debnath, Kazi Mukul, Asim Kumar Ukil and Kalandiar Kabir also attended therally.

Police took the four Aamra Dhakabashi leaders to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday and the court sent them to jail.

Some policemen were still guarding the Ahmadiyya Complex to prevent any fresh attack.

## Jalil asks govt to step down without delay

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday demanded immediate resignation of the BNP led four-party alliance government for being 'responsible for the August 21 grenade blasts'.

On August 21, grenade attacks on AL rally in front of the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue killed 19 people including AL leader Ivy Rahman and injured over 200 including many AL top brass.

"The grenade attacks on Awami League rally was obviously designed to kill Awami League President Sheikh Hasina," said Jalil while attending a human chain on the High Court premises.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote (BSJ) yesterday formed the human chain in protest at the attempt on life of Sheikh Hasina, also leader of the opposition.

"The August 21 grenade attack is a severe blow to democracy and civilisation and we just refuse to accept such cruelties," said Justice KM Sobhan.

He said people of this country are now living in intense anxiety, as there exists barely any sense of security.

Advocate Tarana Halim described the ruling coalition as failing in every aspect and demanded it resigns immediately.

She urged the people to unite in ousting the coalition government.

A silent procession followed the human chain and marched to the scene of the grenade attacks and paid floral tributes.

## Khulna police

**FROM PAGE 1**

an undisclosed place in Dhaka and took him to Khulna on Thursday.

Kamrul is linked to Janajuddho faction of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

Sources said law enforcers will quiz him for leads to the grenade attack as Janajuddho used grenades in their criminal activities in southwestern region of the country.

Our staff correspondent in Khulna said Kamal, an accused in a number of criminal cases, will also be interrogated on the bomb attack on Shachchu and killing of Havildar Akram on April 10 this year in the city.

The High Court last month granted ad interim bail to Kamrul upon a writ petition filed by his father Moulana Abdul Wahab. The High Court also asked Kamrul to appear before a lower court in Khulna on September 13 in connection with Havidar Akram murder case.

Kamrul is the eldest brother of Shoeb alias Ripon and Sumon alias Babu, who are self-styled commanders of Janajuddho hit men and close accomplices of the faction boss, Tapan.

Both Shoeb and Sumon are most wanted criminals in Khulna region and accused in 18 murder cases filed with different police stations in Khulna and Bagherhat.

Their family is known to have close ties with Jamaat-e-Islami.

## Shaukat Aziz

**FROM PAGE 12**

"I don't have a magic lamp or wand, but we will use all our abilities and resources to usher in a new era of progress and prosperity for the people of Pakistan," said the prime minister-elect, who will be sworn in by Musharraf on Saturday before undergoing a lower-house vote of confidence.

Opposition members wearing black armbands had earlier carried pictures of exiled former premiers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif and chanted "Shame, Shame", to protest against the speaker's decision to bar the jailed Javed Hashmi.

Hashmi is serving a 23-year sentence after a court convicted him in April over a letter he distributed, saying it was from army officers criticising President Musharraf.

After hearing arguments from opposition and the ruling party MPs, the speaker, Hussain, ruled that he could not issue an order to produce a convicted person.

Chanting "Restore True Democracy", members of both Islamist and secular opposition parties trooped out of the hall when he announced the start of voting.

"This is a farce, a complete farce, we don't call it election," opposition MP Tehmina Daultana said.

"We are extremely upset at this undemocratic behaviour," she told AFP as opposition MPs gathered in the lobby.

Musharraf came to power in a bloodless coup in 1999.

## I want justice

**FROM PAGE 1**

present at the qulkhwani.

Zillur Rahman MP, AL presidium member, told the journalists, "Wherever I look, I see Ivy. I never knew people loved her so much."

"My only consolation now is that Ivy died while protesting against terrorism and people will remember her ideals, her dedication to politics and society for a very long time," said Zillur.

Their children too demanded proper investigation into the grenade attacks so that the culprits are brought to justice.

Ivy was critically injured in the attack with both of her legs blown off. She died in the early hours of Tuesday at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) after fighting for life for three days.



PHOTO: STAR

Activists of the main opposition Awami League (AL) parade through Dhaka City in procession yesterday to drum up support for their countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal today.

# Overloaded trucks

**FROM PAGE 1**

It cannot afford it. Whenever overload occurs, the pressure of a running vehicle on the road multiplies and when an overloaded vehicle applies its brakes, the pressure is even greater. Unchecked overloading is fast damaging the country's communication infrastructure, they said.

"The load capacity on each square foot of a road and a bridge is clearly mentioned by engineers and other experts after their completion. If that limit is violated, the structures are sure to suffer damage," an engineer said.

"You do not see the damage on a bridge due to overloading in one day. It happens in geometrical progression and takes a long time before surfacing," said another engineer.

The director of Marganet One Ltd, the present leaseholder of the JMB toll plaza, Minhajuddin M Kamal, told The Daily Star that when they got the

five-year lease for Tk 51.14 crore in April 2004, the weigh bridges were not in use. The former leaseholder 'never' used the weigh bridges and the JMBA also never instructed it to operate them.

Director (administration) of the JMBA Yusuf Jahangir declined to comment on the matter, saying he was not authorised to talk to the press.

JMBA sources said up to 2,200 trucks cross the bridge on average a day.

Contacted, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda said his ministry was aware of the problem. Even truck owners' associations want to get rid of overloading, he said.

"I know how much damage is caused by overloading and we have decided to install weigh bridges at all major bridges and we hope to implement the rules in two or three months," Huda said.

# Traces of explosives

**FROM PAGE 12**

bomb in May.

Russian officials have repeatedly contended that the rebels who have been fighting Russian forces in Chechnya for nearly five years receive help from foreign terrorist organisations, including al-Qaida.

Friday's claim of responsibility did not refer to al-Qaida, but a group called "the Islambouli Brigades of al-Qaida" claimed responsibility for last month's attempt to assassinate Pakistan's prime minister-designate.

AFP adds: An Islamic group calling itself the Islambouli Brigades claimed responsibility for the crashes of two Russian planes that killed 90 people, hailing it as a first strike to stop Moscow's fight against separatists in Chechnya.

"The Islambouli Brigades declare that our mujahadeen (fighters) have succeeded in hijacking two Russian planes," said the group in a statement posted on a website.

# Govt plans seed

**FROM PAGE 12**

waters, he added.

Anwar admitted the loss of aus rice almost wholly due the deluge in 46 districts out of the 64 for almost a month from early July to early August. "We still hope to avoid much loss of aman and to reap the maximum out of the next boro season," he said.

On the post-flood agricultural rehabilitation programme, the minister explained that not necessarily all the 2.66 million small and marginal farmers would get aman seeds from the government, rather they would get seeds free-of-cost up to December, in phases. Many of them would get aman seeds, many would get wheat seeds and many others boro, maize and vegetable seeds, he said.

Citing an instance, Anwar said the rehabilitation programme in Narsingdi district will cover 1,08,000 small and marginal farmers out of a total of 1,73,000 farmers, who were affected by the recent floods.

"From mid-August, we'll provide them with seeds and seedlings of 10 crops including aman, boro, wheat, maize, vegetables and mustards for cultivating those in 34,050 acres of land till December this year. This will require 605 tonnes of seeds, of which we've already distributed 37 tonnes of aman seeds," the minister said.

Talking to this correspondent last week, Deputy Director of the DAE at Narsingdi Bipad Bhonjon Das said that as aman sowing season was running out, they were procuring seeds and seedlings through 'on the spot quotations' so that farmers could get those in time.

"Despite the damage of many seedbeds across the country and delay in sowing aman, about 90 percent of aman production target can still be achieved," he hoped.

# Power from banana

**FROM PAGE 12**

they are bruised or too small.

Normally they are left to rot on the ground but Clarke said this damaged the soil and wasted a potentially useful resource.

He has successfully used bananas to generate electricity in the laboratory and is assessing whether a power plant could be commercially viable.

Clarke lets the bananas decompose in sealed vats and uses the methane from the rotting fruit to power an electricity turbine.

"However, we don't know if bananas are a cost-effective energy source, so my research parameters are designed to discover how long it will take to convert the bananas to methane and how much methane is produced," he said.

This involves mashing, pulping

and shredding the waste bananas to find the most efficient way to make them decompose, as well as adding enzymes to speed up the process.

Clarke said he would know by February next year whether bananas were a viable energy source. If they are, the banana industry will consider building a banana-fuelled power plant capable of powering about 500 homes.

Clarke said electricity generated at the plant would be sold to the national grid, providing banana growers with a source of income from what was normally regarded as a waste product.

However, he said the technology's application was limited as it took 60 kilograms (132 pounds) of bananas to power a household appliance such as a fan heater for 30 hours.

# Villagers see Rangpur

**FROM PAGE 1**

Bholaram Chandra Barman, Shushil Chandra Barman, Jitendranath Barman and Shachin Chandra Barman.

About 35 men, women and children of those families are now living in the open after some 40 BNP men led by Abdul Zabbar, former vice president of Sawla union BNP, and his family members burnt down their houses last Monday.

"They have been repeatedly threatening to evict us for long and used to throw stones at our houses, steal household goods and disturb our women and girls," Shushil said.

"We complained to police many times, in vain. They never took any step to solve our problem, prompting Zabbar's nephews to boast pointing to the police inaction," he added, with other victims nodding in agreement.

The persecution started in 2001, when Zabbar and his nephews -- Raju, Saju, Taj, Sabu and Lazu -- ousted the families of Nira Shah and Indu Mai from the village.

Nira and Indu had borrowed two maunds of unhusked rice to meet a crisis on condition of paying Tk 500 in return, narrated several Hindu and Muslim villagers.

But, when the time arrived to pay back the loan, Raju demanded Tk 50,000 instead of Tk 500, which they failed to pay and consequently were evicted from their land at the village. Members of the two Hindu families were later forced to flee to India following threats on their lives, the villagers said.

The victims of Monday's attack also alleged, at the end of 2001, Raju tried to rape Shilpi Rani, wife of Sukumar Chandra Barman. But the villagers caught him red-handed. Later Zabbar persuaded the villagers to let Raju go assuring them of justice that was never done.

In 2002, Suren Chandra Barman filed a case accusing Zabbar, Raju and his four brothers of threatening to displace his family. In retaliation, Raju's gang carried out the threat -- torched Suren's home and built a house on his land after driving the family away.

The six people accused by Suren received bail from a Rangpur court on

August 16 last and then launched the raid last Monday, the victims said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Rangpur Superintendent of Police Abdus Salam however denied the allegations of police indifference saying no one had come up with any complaint about ejection threat on the Hindu families.

"And even if there was any previous charge against the accused of arson attack, police have nothing to do, as those cases might now be at the court," observed the district police chief.

He said police on Thursday arrested Raju, the prime accused of the arson, raising the number of arrestees so far in the case to four, out of a total of 21 accused.

## Red tape halts

**FROM PAGE 12**

ties and number of students.

On April 8, the education ministry sent a letter to the directorate demanding an explanation how the colleges were included in the MPO system without changing their code numbers.

"The directorate is tasked with changing college code numbers, but non-government teachers are bleeding because of its neglect," said Quazi Faruk Ahmed, president of Bangladesh College Teachers' Association.

But sources in the directorate said some colleges were given the MPO status without following the proper rule.

"Teachers of 263 colleges drew the government part of their salaries using their intermediate college code numbers," said a high official of the directorate.

The directorate does not issue new code numbers to colleges, rather the education ministry holds the authority, he claimed.

Mohammed Junaid, director general of the directorate, admitted that teachers of 263 non-government colleges were not getting their salaries.

"The codes of some of the colleges have been changed and the teachers there will get the government part of their salaries soon," Junaid added.

# Railway sees Tk 215 cr

**FROM PAGE 12**

higher than the existing number of staff. Around Tk 80 crore is spent from the BR funds for 40,000 pensioners a year," one source said.

The BR cannot meet the high demand for railway transportation due to shortage of locomotives and carriages. It operates 278 locomotives and 1,349 carriages across the country that carry 4.45 crore passengers a year. About 75 percent of the locomotives have already crossed their economic life -- 20 years -- and about half of the carriages have crossed their normal life span, 30 years, sources mentioned.

They said 70 locomotives for metre and broad gauge lines are 36 to 50-year-old, 54 are 31 to 35-year-old and 86 are 21 to 30-year-old. It has become impossible to provide quality service to travellers with these rundown locomotives and carriages, dilapidated signalling system and century-old railway network.

"The railway authorities lack funds to maintain and repair the locomotives while many rundown carriages have remained inoperative for long," a senior official said seeking anonymity.

According to a BR report, over one lakh people travel by trains a day and the number is on the rise. In 2000-2001, the number of passengers was 3.87 crore, in 2002-2003 it was 3.90 crore and last year it rose to 4.45 crore.

Sources said successive governments have ignored railway sector since the independence. The country

now has 28,000 km of paved roads while it had only 400 km when British rule ended in 1947. But the railway network of 2,880 km at that time, mostly set up before 1905, still remain almost unchanged.

A 53-km-long broad gauge line between Darshana and Jagati in Kushtia was constructed first by Eastern Bengal Railway in 1862, they mentioned.

Train fare has not increased since 1992 but fuel price has gone up almost three times. Staff salary has also increased.

But the railway's income from ticket sale has risen over the last three years. The earning totalled Tk 159 crore in fiscal 2001-2002, Tk 161 crore in 2002-2003 and Tk 178 crore in 2003-2004, sources said.

The DG said the BR has launched a comprehensive Railway Recovery Programme (RRP) to improve its financial position through increased efficiency and cost reduction.

"We will expand our network establishing direct railway links between Dhaka and Laksham to shorten the distance by 90 km and between Jamuna Bridge and Bogra to reduce the distance by 114 km," Mustafizur said.

The BR already floated tender to buy 130 carriages, he mentioned. "We will also get 11 locomotives from South Korea by next year. We are planning to buy another 150 carriages from India soon."

# Sadr militias hand

**FROM PAGE 1**

who said it was his personal weapon and would not be given up, added: "I will keep this warm and wait for Sayyed Moqtada's sorder."

The Najaf uprising has been a stark reminder to the interim government and the United States, which led the war to depose Saddam Hussein last year, of the huge hurdles ahead in Iraq.

President Bush acknowledged for the first time on Thursday he had miscalculated postwar conditions in Iraq, the New York Times reported. The paper quoted Bush as saying during a 30-minute interview that he made "a miscalculation of what the conditions would be" in post-war Iraq.

Tens of thousands of Shias arrived on the outskirts of Najaf on Thursday, heeding a call by Sistani to march on the city. Just after dawn on Friday, they walked past dozens of pockmarked and destroyed buildings to the mosque.

Spent ammunition littered the city center, which a day earlier had been infested with snipers.

Many pilgrims were overcome with emotion at the gold-domed mosque. Some kissed the ornate walls inside the shrine and wept after they queued to get in.

"We pray today that Najaf will recover. The military operations have only brought destruction," said Kassem Hameed, a 52-year-old oil worker from the southern city of Basra.

Some chanted pro-Sistani slogans and held up posters of the reclusive Iranian-born cleric. The occasional crackle of gunfire echoed nearby.

Under the peace deal, Najaf will be

a weapons-free zone.

Iraq's government also said Sadr would not face arrest. Earlier this year an Iraqi arrest warrant was issued for Sadr in connection with the murder of a rival cleric in Najaf last year.

The peace deal came after a day of bloodshed. The Health Ministry said at least 74 people were killed in mortar and shooting attacks in Najaf and nearby Kufa on Thursday.

Sistani arrived in Iraq on Wednesday after three weeks in London for heart treatment. The uprising had erupted as he left his adopted home in Najaf, Iraq's center of Shia learning.

Sadr, aged only about 30, has challenged the collegiate leadership of the Najaf clergy headed by Sistani and styled himself as the face of anti-US Shia resistance.

Elsewhere in Iraq violence, Allawi and his US backers still face problems: A car bomb exploded near a US military convoy in northern Iraq, wounding at least 10 civilians, and the Italian government confirmed on Thursday that hostage takers who grabbed Italian journalist Enzo Baldoni had killed him.

Al Jazeera television said Baldoni's kidnappers killed him because Italy refused to withdraw troops from Iraq. Scores of foreigners have been taken hostage in Iraq in the last five months. Most have been released but several have been killed.

A Kuwaiti transport firm said on Friday it would halt its operations in Iraq after a group holding seven of its drivers hostage said it would release them if the firm left the country.