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Interpol experts arrive today to help probe

Judicial commission starts investigation today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Interpol experts will arrive in Dhaka today to help investigate the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally that killed 19 and injured over 200 others.

It is also today that the one-member judicial commission formed by the government begins its

probe into the attack, as another inquiry committee, of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), started recording statements of the injured yesterday.

In the wake of repeated bomb blasts, sources said, the police headquarters has decided to form a 30-member bomb squad within a few days.

INTERPOL EXPERTS

The two-member Interpol team comprising Geoffrey Isles, an officer of Australian Federal Police, and Jacqueline Polansk, a US private terrorism expert, will arrive at Zia International Airport by a Thai Airways flight at 11:55am today.

Inspector General of Police Shahidul Haque said, "The team

will visit the spot, speak to police, intelligence agencies and other people concerned."

"The experts will later prepare a report on their preliminary findings, based on which the Interpol will decide its follow-up actions," Haque added.

On the specific objective of the

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AL for int'l probe under UN or Commonwealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An independent international probe into the August 21 deadly grenade attack could be opened under the United Nations or the Commonwealth, the main opposition Awami League (AL) said yesterday.

"We don't want any international body here only to assist our police or investigation teams formed by the government. Only an international probe body free from government pressure will be able to trace the attackers," said AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil at his residence.

"It's an irony that the people who could not provide security for the leader of the opposition are carrying

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Opposition parties plan agitation for early polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mainstream opposition parties plan to force the government to announce early general elections through a vigorous movement after turning down the government's offer of dialogue with them.

Policy-makers of the opposition parties are now working out a strategy to realise the demand after rejecting Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's talks offer terming it as a 'cosmetic call'.

After three days of countrywide hartal protesting the deadly grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally

in Dhaka on August 21, 11-left parties and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) are discussing broad-based unity with the AL for the agitation.

The opposition leaders last night sat with Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence to discuss the overall political situation.

The next agitation in protest against the grenade attack that killed 19 people and injured over 200 others on Bangabandhu Avenue is likely to include a 12-hour countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal this week, opposition sources said.

The opposition leaders are also

pondering political programmes alternative to hartal to involve people and professional bodies in the anti-government demonstration.

Earlier, frontline AL leaders on Friday night discussed the political situation and next agitation programmes while the 11 left parties are discussing the option of joining a united movement with the AL.

Sources said the left leaders at a meeting at the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal office yesterday were divided over the united movement, especially over the 'excessive

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Workers refurbish the office of the judge heading a one-member judicial enquiry commission yesterday at 2/A Central Lane in Kakrail. The commission is scheduled to start probing today the deadly grenade attack on an Awami League rally on August 21.

PHOTO: STAR

Manzurul Imam murder accused killed in fight with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Imam Sarder alias Hasan Imam (32), an outlaw and one of the four chargesheeted accused in city Awami League (AL) president Manzurul Imam murder, was killed yesterday in a gunfight with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police near Prashadpur bridge in Rampal upazila of Bagerhat district.

No-one of the Rab and police personnel was injured in the nearly 25-minute gunfight at about 4:00am during an arms recovery operation.

Imam's body was sent to Bagerhat Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

He was a cadre of Janajuddho faction of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and younger brother of Selim Sarder, general secretary of Rampal upazila unit of the AL, and hailed from Borni village of the upazila.

Tipped-off, a Rab team arrested Imam from Pable area in Daulatpur thana on Friday night and recovered a shotgun and a live cartridge from

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Tk 1 cr reward for disclosing attackers' identity planned

1,500 more cops to be recruited urgently

STAR REPORT

The government may announce a reward of Tk 1 crore to anyone disclosing the names of the persons or groups responsible for August 21 grenade attack on Sheikh Hasina.

State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar and Home Secretary Omar Faruk met with top police officials including the inspector general of police and heads of different intelligence agencies Friday night and discussed the merit of announcing such a bounty.

He got a positive feedback from the law enforcing agencies which felt that such a move would make it difficult for the attackers to remain hidden.

The meeting felt that some of the lower-level operatives of the group

involved in the attacks might be lured by the cash reward into coming with information. The government would keep the name of the informant a secret.

The idea of reward came as detectives are still in the dark about the identity of the attackers, tarnishing the image of the government. They visited the spot five days after the attack and the area where the attack was carried out was left open to anyone. This has destroyed some vital evidence, many alleged. No arrests have been made in connection with the attacks.

Friday's meeting also decided to immediately recruit 1,500 police to boost security. Eight more police stations will be set up on a priority basis.

Sylhet Shrine Blast 3 Shibir men held, sent to JIC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Three more activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir were arrested in Sylhet on Friday in connection with the bomb blast at the Hazrat Shahjalal Shrine. They were arrested from a students' mess at Akhlaia and sent to Dhaka yesterday for producing before the joint interrogation cell (JIC).

The arrestees are Moazzem Hossain Sayem, Delwar Hossain and Maruf Rahman.

They are shown arrested under section 54 and were produced before the magistrate court on Friday afternoon. Police sought a 10-day remand while the court granted seven days.

The number of people arrested in the case is 24. Investigation Officer of the case, ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman of the criminal investigation department (CID) declined to go into details about the progress of the investigation.

The CID also sent Ranjit Sarker, joint convener of the city unit of

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Youth gunned down, child beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown assailants yesterday gunned down a youth in Demra and a man beat up his foster son to death in Kamrangir Char Friday.

Russell Khan, 25, along with his friend and also neighbour Suman was watching TV at his house in South Dhania in Paterbagh. A man called him out at around 2:30pm, said Suman.

"Hearing a couple of gunshots, I rushed to the spot and found him lying on the road," Suman told reporters.

Locals rushed Russell with three bullets in his head and face to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead at 3:20pm.

Jamila Khatun, the victim's mother, said she is clueless about the killing.

In Kamrangir Char, eight-year-old Md Russell went missing from

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Hartal halts life for third time

General strike called again for tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal jointly enforced by the Awami League (AL) and other opposition parties yesterday brought life to a halt for the third time in the last five days and sporadic police-picket clashes and police baton charges in different places left dozens injured.

The main opposition AL, left leaning 11-party alliance, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) and National Awami Party (NAP-Muzaffar) called the hartal to protest the August 21 grenade attack on an AL rally in an attempt to assassinate party President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and in demand for resignation of the BNP-

led ruling coalition.

The Jubo League and Mohila Awami League yesterday called the fourth hartal (dawn-to-dusk) since the attack for tomorrow. Twenty other women's organisations have also supported the hartal.

Earlier, the ruling BNP shifted its previously declared demonstration movement from August 28 to 30 to avoid confrontation with the opposition parties as the opposition called hartal on that day.

The hartal, also to protest the killing of 20 people including AL central leader Ivy Rahman in the grenade attack and police excesses during the hartals on Tuesday and Wednesday, shut most businesses,

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PM holds image crisis talks with ex-foreign secys

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia held a brainstorming session with seven former foreign secretaries yesterday for reviving Bangladesh's image abroad and taking steps on the world stage in the wake of Awami League (AL) rally bombing on August 21.

"The prime minister asked them to harness all their experience in this field to overcome the damage to Bangladesh's image abroad," Foreign Minister M. Moshir Khan told reporters at his office yesterday.

"The attack was made by people who have a problem with Bangladesh's successful economic progress, recognition by world leaders of Bangladesh as a moderate and tolerant Muslim-majority nation and people who will benefit from Bangladesh's downfall."

It is essential that Bangladesh regain its image at a time when

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ADAMJEE JUTE MILLS

Pond stands in way of industrial park

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The Ministry of Industries is at loggerheads with the Planning Commission over filling up a pond and building a road on the former Adamjee Jute Mills premises, stalling finalisation of the project concept paper (PCP) to set up a private industrial park there.

The ministry wants to fill up seven of the eight ponds but the commission favours filling up six, arguing at least two ponds need to be retained in the proposed Adamjee Industrial Park to strike an ecological balance, according to sources.

The ministry, however, says the pond which is the bone of contention is sprawled over 11.30 acres and 27 industrial plots are to be built on the land to open up job opportuni-

ties to 49,000 people.

The government closed down the Adamjee Jute Mills, which used to be the biggest jute mill in Asia, on July 1, 2002, in line with donors' prescription as it continued to incur huge losses.

Some 26,000 workers lost their job when the mill was closed down, but the government envisaged the industrial park would create job opportunities for as many as nine lakh people.

As for the road, the Planning Commission wants to have a brick road to cut down on project costs, while the ministry wants a concrete road reasoning that the proposed industrial park should have roads like those in the export processing zones.

Bangladesh Small and Cottage

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