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Fear of AL, BNP face-off over street agitation today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tension runs high as the BNP-led ruling alliance and the Awami League (AL) head for street showdown today with their programmes over the August 21 deadly grenade attack on the main opposition rally.

The Mohila Awami League and the Juba League, women and youth fronts of the AL, are set to enforce a dawn-to-dusk countrywide hartal to protest the rally bombing that killed 20 people and injured over 200 others.

The AL has extended support to the hartal call, the fourth after the bombing on Bangabandhu Avenue

in the heart of the capital apparently aimed at assassinating AL President Sheikh Hasina.

The ruling four-party alliance is also set to stage rallies in Dhaka, protesting the attack and violence in its wake.

The BNP deferred its protest rally programme from August 28 to 30 because of a hartal by the AL, left 11-party alliance, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party (NAP) coincided with it.

But no-one of the bitter political rivals has suspended its programme to calm down the boiling political stage.

The government put the law

enforcement agencies on high alert to avoid probable clashes.

Sources said a section of policymakers in the key parties tried to avoid confrontation by deferring their agitation programmes, but faced strong opposition within the parties.

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) yesterday expressed concern at the simultaneous programmes.

The FBCCI requested the AL to defer the hartal programme to another day what the ruling BNP earlier did.

Both the political parties stuck to

their programmes and continued to shift the blame onto each other, stoking fears of violence, chaos and confrontation.

"We showed our tolerance and shifted Saturday's programme to Monday to avoid confrontation, but the main opposition called the hartal with deliberate intent to hamper our programme," BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told a press briefing yesterday.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil dismissed the allegation, saying his party did not consider others' programmes to chart out its course

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BNP firm to hold today's protest rallies

Blames AL for trying to pick quarrel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP is adamant to go ahead with its today's protest rallies at Muktangan in the city and elsewhere in the country despite the hartal called by Awami Juba and Mohila leagues to protest the August 21 grenade attack on Awami League meeting.

"We showed maximum tolerance and deferred our Saturday's programme to Monday to avoid any conflict or confrontation with AL programmes. But the main opposition has deliberately called hartal again on our new programme day," BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told a news

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Interpol experts scan carnage scene

Collect info from local investigators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Interpol experts arrived in Dhaka yesterday to assess the August 21 carnage and determine expertise vital to a thorough investigation into the grisly attack that killed 19 people and injured over 200 others.

The team of Jeffrey Eyles, an expert on public safety and terrorism affairs, and Jacqueline Pullums, a US analyst of civilian terrorism, collected primary information from the police and intelligence officials probing the incident.

They also visited the scene of the

well-orchestrated attack on Bangabandhu Avenue where Bangladesh investigators briefed the Interpol experts on the mapping of the carnage scene.

An investigator hoped the arrival of the Interpol members would add speed to the investigation that apparently ran into a dead end.

"The Interpol team will assess the incident and send findings to its headquarters that will accordingly dispatch experts. A full-fledged investigation will then begin," BBC Radio quoted State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar as saying. He also said Interpol would work

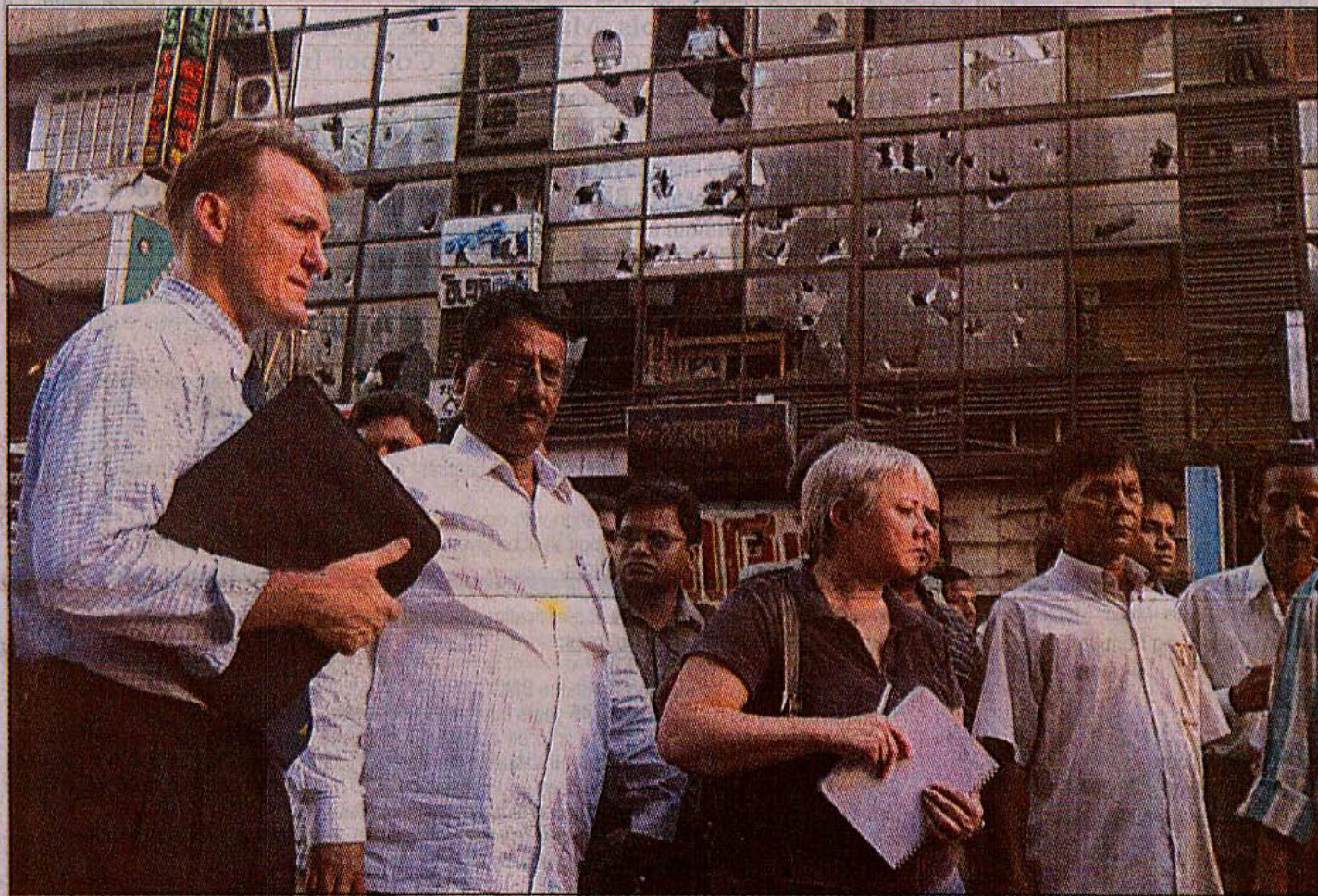
independently. A one-member judicial commission formed by the government opened its probe into the attack yesterday and its head Justice Joyrul Abedin and the officials assisting him visited the spot and talked to Awami League leaders.

FIRST DAY

Eyles and Pullums arrived at Zia International Airport (ZIA) by Thai Airways flight at about 12:30pm to the reception of CID Special Superintendent Ruhul Amin who briefed them on the gory episode.

Eyles told newsmen that

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Interpol experts Jeffrey Eyles, far left, and Jacqueline Pullums, second from right, visit the scene yesterday to assess the August 21 carnage on Bangabandhu Avenue and determine expertise needed to probe the incident.

EMAIL THREAT Sender could be one of many users

NAFID IMRAN AHMED

The August 23 email threatening to assassinate Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and claiming responsibility for the August 21 grenade attacks may have been sent by one of the many users who share Internet connections from Heart-net cyber café.

Officials of the café on Elephant Road, from which the email was allegedly sent, told The Daily Star yesterday that they also provided shared connections to 23 nearby houses and offices and all of them use the same gateway.

Intelligence officials picked up Shaibal Saha Partha, a job-seeking graduate from an Indian university, from the cyber café on charge of sending the email as a Hikmatul Zihad activist to Bangla daily The Prothom Alo.

Tens of millions of people actively use the Internet in more than 130 countries at any given time, but it is not easy for anyone to get lost in the crowd, as when someone online they leave traces behind.

There are more than one way to trace down an email sender. One of the basic ways is to look at the IP

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APPOINTMENT OF 19 JUDGES Lawyers to boycott chief justice's court from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supreme Court lawyers will boycott the chief justice's court indefinitely from today, as he ignored their demand for cancellation of the swearing-in of 19 new additional judges appointed on what they said were political grounds.

The Supreme Court Bar Association yesterday at a meeting decided that any member, including the attorney general, would be expelled from the Bar in failure to comply with the boycott decision.

According to a meeting resolution, the Bar will serve notices on Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, seeking explanations from them of what consideration applied to the judges' appointment.

The Bar will file a writ petition with the High Court to challenge the appointment after the lawyers receive explanations.

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain slated the government for the "mysterious" appointment before the

court vacation, which he said was based on political loyalty to the ruling coalition and nepotism.

"Who cannot write a sentence in English and who does not know how to proceed a case will now deliver judgement. He will hand down death sentence without hearing the case. It's a shame," Dr Kamal told the meeting.

"We want to know how they were appointed as judges and who recommended their recruitment."

The government appointed 19 additional judges to the High Court on August 23, triggering resentment among lawyers who described the recruitment as the worst-case example of political motives. The fourth recruitment by the BNP-led coalition took the number of judges appointed to the High Court to 45 since 2002.

The Bar at an emergency requisition meeting that day resolved the new judges should not be addressed as "My Lord" which should be replaced by a new term in consultation

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Four 'robbers' lynched in Kishoreganj

UNB, Kishoreganj

An angry mob put four suspected robbers to death and wounded six others of the gang at Nanosree village in Nikli upazila early yesterday.

Police arrested the injured six and recovered a pipe-gun, ammunition and three knives from their possession.

The four dead were identified as Tamsu, 35, ringleader of the infamous 'Tamsu bahini', Babul, Bachchu, 30, and Sohrab, 26.

Tamsu and his accomplices attacked the boat of fisherman Hossain Mia in Challir Beel at 4:00am firing gunshots to create panic at the scene, police and eyewitnesses said.

Other fishermen guarding the water-body barricaded the robbers and informed Nikli police station over cell-phone about the gang attack.

"As police rushed in, the robbers locked in a gunfight with them. Also hundreds of villagers coming out of their homes nabbed all the robbers in a combined action," says a spot account of the predawn raid.

Enraged locals beat them black and blue, leaving three dead on the spot and injuring seven. Police rescued the injured ones—Sohrab, Mohorom Ali, Yasin, Suruj, Selim, Harun and Sultan -- and took them to Nikli Health Complex. Sohrab, died there.

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Mastermind in Shamsur killing nabbed

Badly injured in interrogation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and Detective Branch of Khulna police in a joint operation yesterday arrested Asaduzzaman Litu, a chargesheeted accused in journalist Shamsur Rahman murder case, at Abhoyanagar upazila of Jessore.

Litu, 42, was returning to Khulna from Dhaka by a rented car while a team of Rab and DB intercepted him at Noapara at about 4:30 am. Sources said he was found stoned while police made the arrest.

He allegedly masterminded the killing of Jessore Bureau Chief of Dainik Janakantha Shamsur Rahman on July 16 in 2000 at the latter's office on Hospital Road. He is one of the 17 chargesheeted accused

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Tk 1cr reward for info about rally bombers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has announced a reward of Tk 1 crore to anyone disclosing information about the August 21 grenade attacks on an Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue.

"We want to reveal truth, which is why we announced the reward," State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday told reporters after a home ministry meeting on law and order.

This is the biggest bounty yet offered by the government to hunt down the bombers in the country, as the law-enforcing agencies have failed to catch them.

Inspector General of Police (IGP)

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Meagre response to UN flood aid appeal

SHAKHAWAT LITON and ASHFAQ WARES KHAN

Government unconcern and fallout of the August 21 grenade attacks have apparently dampened the global response to the United Nations flash appeal that was only \$38 million until yesterday, far short of the targeted \$210 million.

Most donors are closely monitoring the aftermath of the grenade attacks on a main opposition Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue that killed 19 people, sources said.

The UN launched the flash appeal on August 12 to the world community for \$210 million to help 33 million flood victims in Bangladesh for six months.

UN Resident Coordinator Jorgen Lissner told The Daily Star: "The absence of a clear and unequivocal appeal by the government to the international community is perhaps a greater restraint to donors more than the lack of media coverage and instability."

But another senior UN official in Dhaka said: "They (donor countries and agencies) are worried about the prevailing political situation and waiting for more stability."

The UN flash appeal is thought of as 'old news' that has gradually gone

off the global media spotlight as the bulk of global aid is being channelled into Sudan to cut the crisis there.

"The current need for aid in Sudan and the attack on the Awami League rally have stolen a lot of political spotlight, but the donors have to understand the needs of people are still very severe," said another UN official, requesting anonymity.

Lissner said it was too early to call the fund commitment paltry, as he hoped donors would pledge more funds at a meeting at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva on Tuesday to discuss the flash appeal and post-flood rehabilitation.

The Bangladesh envoy to Geneva is expected to join the discussion and a better idea of future donor commitments is expected after the meeting, he said.

The UN has officially received \$38 million from donor countries and agencies, plus \$22.6 million received in flood relief before the appeal was launched.

The government and non-governmental organisations received \$47 million from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Canada, Norway and Australia.

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State-owned vessel sued for oil spillage at Ctg port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong port authorities (CPA) yesterday sued a lighterage vessel of state-owned Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) under Marine Pollution Act for oil spillage at the port channel causing threat to marine lives and environment.

The BSC ship MT Banglar Shourav caused oil spillage at the channel water from Friday night and port officials detected it the next day when it was anchored at the dry-dock jetty for repair. Black oil spilled over from it and fouled over a 15 km expanse of water at the confluence of the Bay and the Karnaphuli river.

High officials of BSC visited the vessel and the river channel yesterday.

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Myanmar rebel leader surrenders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Leader of the Democratic Party of Arakan, a rebel organisation of Myanmar, Ba Ong Mong and his family surrendered to the security forces in Tarachha in Roangchhari upazila Saturday.

Ba Ong Mong is a notorious criminal in Tarachha. He used to introduce himself as an indigenous man and collect tolls from the poor indigenous people and traders at gunpoint.

The Myanmar-based rebel group has been operating criminal activity in Tarachha, Betchhara and some other areas for some days, highly placed sources said.

Security forces conducted

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A crowd watches a photo montage the Awami League put up yesterday at the scene of the August 21 grisly grenade blasts in its rally on Bangabandhu Avenue that killed 19 and wounded 200 others.

PHOTO: STAR

18 AL leaders go to India for treatment today

Conditions of others hurt in grenade attacks worsen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Condition of some of the Awami League (AL) leaders, who are under treatment in different city hospitals since sustaining severe shrapnel wounds in the August 21 grenade attacks, worsened while 18 others fly to India today for better treatment.

AL and its front organisation leaders who are leaving Dhaka early this morning are Obaidul Kader, Bahauddin Nasim, Enamul Haque Shamim, Ishak Ali Khan Panna, Ajay Kar Khokan, Nazrul Islam Babu, Shahabuddin Farazi, Bahar Mia,

Nasima Ferdousi, Asma Zerin Jhuma, Najimuddin Talukdar, Shahida Tareq Dipti, Rashida Akhter Ruma, Doulatunnahar, Momtaz Hossain and Ilias Mollah. They will receive treatment either in Kolkata or Delhi.

Besides, two of Sheikh Hasina's security personnel, Major (ret'd) Tareq Siddiqui and SM Kamal Hossain will also be off today for further treatment abroad.

AL President Sheikh Hasina will bear most of their medical expenses.

Meanwhile, doctors in the hospitals said they are unable to remove

the shrapnel as any further surgery may cause further damage to the surrounding tissues.

Condition of Neela Choudhury, women's affairs secretary of Dhaka Mahanagar Shechha Shebok League, who is under treatment at Samorita Hospital with over 100 splinters, remained critical.

Neela told The Daily Star, "I still have no sensation in my right leg. Doctors here are unable to take out the splinters since those remain dangerously close to the bones, veins and joints."

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Polls to 21 municipalities Oct 6, 7

BSS, Dhaka

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday announced schedule for the elections in 21 pourasabhas. According to the schedule elections will be held on October 6 and 7.

The pourasabhas are Charchat, Bera, Ishwardi, Santhia, Chaitmohar, Betagi, Mehediaganj, Swarupkati, Islampur, Bhaluka, Bajiapur, Bhairab, Narsingdi, Faridpur, Bhedaganj, Chhatak, Srimongla, Shaharai, Raozan, Khargachhari and Rangamati.

The last date for submission of nomination papers is September 13 and scrutiny of nomination papers will be held on the following day. The last date of withdrawal of nomination is September 20.

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