



The Daily Star

TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XIV NO. 224

DHAKA SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 2004

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People's Right to Know

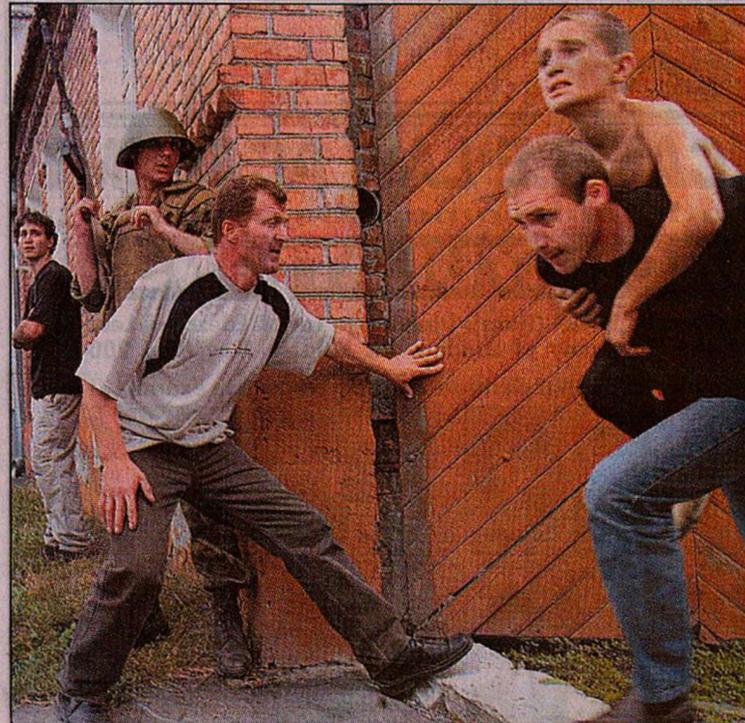
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20 PAGES PRICE: Tk 7.00

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SCHOOL STORMED TO FREE RUSSIAN HOSTAGES More than 100 killed in chaotic battle



AFP, Beslan

More than 100 people were reportedly killed and hundreds more wounded, yesterday as Russian special forces stormed a school to free scores of children and adults held hostage by Chechen rebels for almost three days.

Amid the cacophony of gunfire and bursts of explosions, dozens of children, many either naked or wearing nothing but their underwear, ran screaming from the school in the North Ossetia region into the arms of waiting troops.

More than 100 corpses of hostages were found in the school gymnasium into which the rebels demanding independence for war-torn Chechnya had herded their hostages, the Interfax agency reported, citing its correspondent on the scene.

It said some of the dead were killed when the school's roof caved in as part of a confusing chain of events which ended the standoff, launched on Wednesday by masked gunmen, wearing explosives strapped around their waists.

The fighting that erupted with the assault continued for hours both in the school premises and at least one other location outside the school grounds.

Interfax news agency said at least 10 of the militants were killed by gunfire in the fighting.

Amid total panic and confusion, soldiers were seen stretching away the injured, while some of the free hostages sat numbly or in tears on rows of green canvas stretchers lined up on some grass across the road

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A man carries a boy hostage as a soldier and volunteer stand behind a school fence during the rescue operation in the town of Beslan, Russia yesterday. Six loud explosions could be heard outside the school within the space of about 15 minutes, and shortly afterwards it was reported that some hostages escaped.

Bush accepts nomination, vows to fight terror

AP, New York

President Bush pledged "a safer world and a more hopeful America" as he accepted his party's nomination for a second term in office and plunged into the final two months of his re-election campaign.

He promptly drew fire yesterday from challenger John Kerry that he was "unfit to lead this country."

In the city that transformed his presidency three Septembers ago, Bush declared to a raucous GOP convention crowd: "We have fought the terrorists across the earth - not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. ... We have led, many have joined, and America and the world are safer."

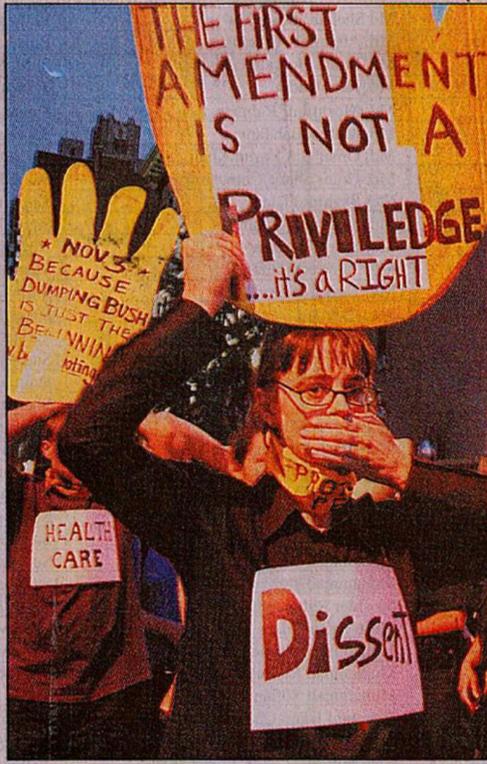
Bush wasted no time in getting back on the campaign trail, leaving heavily Democratic New York soon after his hour-long speech Thursday night for the more politically promising battleground of Pennsylvania.

He planned a Friday morning rally in the Scranton area, with stops later in the day in Wisconsin and Iowa.

Bush stood a few miles from where two hijacked planes destroyed the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001, to make a nationally broadcast appeal to Americans for another term. "In the last four years, you and I have come to know each other. Even when we don't agree, at least you know what I believe and where I stand," he said.

He boasted of first-term accomplishments, outlined plans for a second-term agenda and criticized Kerry on both domestic and foreign policy counts. "My opponent's policies are dramatically different from ours," he said, calling Kerry's

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Anti-Bush demonstrators walk past police at a protest against the Republican convention near Madison Square Garden in New York City on Thursday. US President George W Bush accepted his party's nomination for reelection capping the four-day Republican National Convention.

Rab nabs top Ctg criminal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a top-notch criminal of the city and recovered a German-made pistol with bullets from his possession on Thursday night.

Being tipped-off, a Rab team arrested Tinku Das, 32, a former leader of the JCD Chittagong city unit, at a restaurant at Stadium Market under Kotwali Police Station at around 9:00pm.

On his confession, the Rab members later recovered a German-made 9mm Luger pistol and ten bullets from another restaurant on the first floor of Mimi Super Market under Panchlaish Police Station.

They also nabbed Ejaj Mia, a

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Foreign aid dips, FDI on the rise

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

Foreign aid to Bangladesh dipped as much as 50 percent in the last fiscal year although foreign direct investment (FDI) rose 2.39 percent at the same time.

Foreign aid worth \$792 million was disbursed in the FY 2003-04, according to the primary figures of the Economic Relations Division (ERD). The development partners released \$1.58 billion in the previous fiscal year.

Last fiscal year saw all forms of aids decline, with project aid alone plunging about 44 percent to \$770 million against \$1.36 billion in the previous year. Bangladesh received \$11 million in commodity aid and \$10 million in food aid in the last

Interpol preparing list of suspects 'Grenades were hurled both from above and ground'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Interpol experts are likely to list suspects next week of the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally that killed 19 people, investigators said yesterday.

Six days into an investigation, local investigators quoted the Interpol team as saying the grenades were hurled both from above and the ground in the direction of a truck that AL leaders used to address a rally on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Four Interpol members visited the blast site in Dhaka shortly before 6:30am yesterday along with local investigators and scanned the area

for about two hours.

Later, the Interpol team checked the truck that was taken to the Police Control Room in Shahbagh after the attack.

It was Interpol's second visit to Bangabandhu Avenue that came after an advance team of Jacqueline Pullums, a US analyst of civilian terrorism, and Jeffrey Eyles, an expert on public safety and terrorism affairs, gathered evidence from the scene on August 29.

The four members include Marash Vuclaj, a specialist on public safety and security, and Xin Hu, an expert on terrorism, who joined

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Aziz Supermarket blast injures two Police say they were making bomb

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people, including an arrested crime suspect, were injured when a bomb they were apparently making went off at an NGO office at Aziz Supermarket in Shahbagh yesterday.

Police seized bomb-making materials in the wake of the explosion from the office of Manabmukti Samajkalyan Sangstha that police said was working as an undercover recruiting agency.

Police took injured Kazi Mohammadullah Shohag, 22, a staff of the NGO, into their custody after first aid for interrogation and critically injured Khorshed Alam Ripon,

24, who claimed himself to be a taxicab driver, is undergoing treatment at the Orthopaedic Hospital.

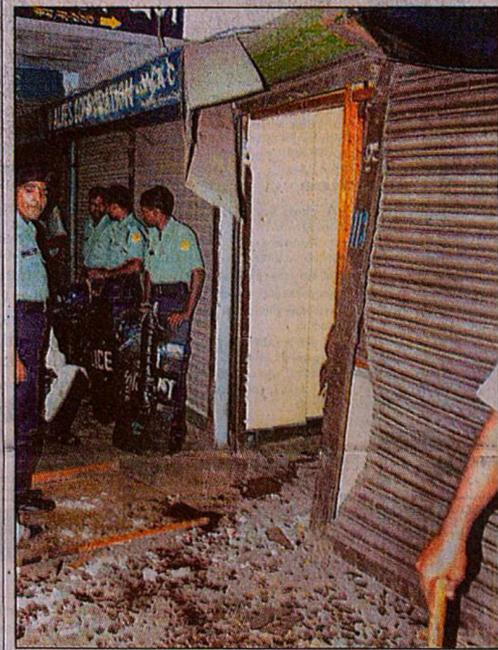
Witnesses said the bomb exploded with a big bang at the building on the first floor of the market at 2:05pm and blew off the glass door and parts of a shutter of the office.

Shopkeepers of the market rushed to the scene and saw a young man trying to crawl out of the office covered with a thick layer of smoke.

He suffered critical injuries to his face, chest, right hand and legs.

The shopkeepers rushed the injured pair to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on

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Police guard the office of a non-governmental organisation at Aziz Supermarket in Dhaka yesterday after a bomb went off in the making, blasting off a glass door and part of a metal shutter.

Threat to blow up DU Arts Building

DU CORRESPONDENT

An anonymous letter to the Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University yesterday threatened to blow up the Arts Building on the campus in five days.

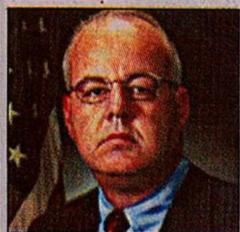
"I found the letter at about 10:30am when I went into my room to check emails. I instantly informed the vice-chancellor about it," said Professor Sheikh Abdus Salam, chair of the department.

"In the next five days we -- the patriots -- (are) promising that we will bomb and destroy the entire Arts Building of the university ..."

"We will gain it because we want a better life, a better country and an Islamic country. This bomb is capable of destroying half of this precious building. This bomb can be anywhere in the department waiting to blow. We are not monsters, we are doing this for future generation. Secondly, we will never be called terrorists ... we will be respected by people as great patriots. Your countdown is from the very moment," the letter says.

Vice-Chancellor Professor SMA Faiz told The Daily Star that

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Top US expert on counter-terrorism due tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Washington's special envoy on counter-terrorism Joseph Cofer Black arrives here tomorrow on a two-day trip probably to discuss bilateral collaboration to combat terrorism.

The former head of CIA counter-terrorism and now US State Department's coordinator for counter-terrorism is coming to Dhaka following the US State Department's recent observation on stronger terrorist presence in Bangladesh.

Black's visit is also seen as a sequel to US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca's visit in May, when she noted, "Bangladesh is going off its tolerant track record," and Congressman Joseph Crowley's in January who said, "Intolerance is taking hold in some parts of Bangladesh."

Briefing a Congressional committee recently, Black hinted that the Terrorist Interdiction Programme (TIP) is in preparatory phase in Bangladesh and would be added to a memorandum of intent (MoI) signed between Washington and Dhaka during Rocca's visit. The

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Before operation



Just after operation

Smile Brighter

Cleft-lip is far more a social setback than a health problem. Boys and girls cursed with cleft-lips face lots of problem in everyday life ranging from disruption of formal education, attending social ceremonies and difficulties to marry off. Considering the gravity of the situation

Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation

Has taken an initiative to bring back

smile

On the faces of the boys and girls with cleft-lips through plastic surgery since 2003

And the Foundation

Continues with the plastic surgery program at Foundation's cost throughout the country for those cleft-lipped boys and girls (age up to 20 years) whose parents are unable to afford the cost of plastic surgery.

Applications are invited from cleft-lipped boys and girls with complete mailing address and other elaborate information to:

Coordinator

Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation

195, Motijheel Commercial Area (5th Floor)

Sena Kalyan Bhaban

Dhaka-1000



Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited

YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER

Chandpur

As far as you go...
AKTEL is there. Always

Mugger killed in shootout with cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mugger died while another one was critically injured in an encounter with police in Tejgaon early yesterday and gunmen shot an employee of a ward commissioner in Mohammadpur yesterday noon.

Police said four youths were mugging a pedestrian in a lane near the Green Road in Tejgaon at around 12:20am when the police on patrol

intervened.

Confronted by the law enforcers, the muggers opened fire on them. As policemen returned fire, two of the alleged muggers, Mohammad Jalal, 20, and Sagor, 18, received bullets and fell to the ground. The other two, however, managed to flee.

Police rushed critically wounded Jalal, son of Abdul Karim of Mirpur, to Orthopaedics Hospital, where he died at dawn yesterday.

Sagor, the other injured, with several pellets in the stomach, was undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital under police guard. He divulged the identity of the other two muggers--Hakim and Russell.

Police recovered a locally made shooter gun from their possession and filed two cases with the police station concerned.

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