

Thursday 9-9-2004

## Govt seeks army help to tackle bomb scare

### 4 strike force squads in Dhaka planned; BDR on high alert

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday sought army backing to tackle bomb and grenade attacks, recovery of explosives and death threats that have sent panic waves across Bangladesh.

The home ministry at a law and order monitoring meeting yesterday sought training, technical and logistic support for the police to detect and defuse bombs.

Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) asked its personnel in the bordering areas to mount a watch to block the way abroad of 13 suspects of the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally.

The suspects include Mukul, charge-sheeted accused in the Badda arms, grenade and time bomb seizure.

The home ministry meeting also

decided to form four squads bringing together explosives experts from the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police, who will remain alert in police control room round the clock and rush to the scene on information of bombs and death threats.

The teams will be assigned to keep an anticrime watch on four crime zones -- east, west, south and north -- in the capital.

The army support was sought after top police officers told the meeting that they took longer time to detect and defuse bombs for lack of equipment.

The three-hour meeting from 11:00am at the home ministry also decided to seek army help to train up policemen for quick detection and defusion of bombs in the wake of a string of retrievals.

An intelligence unit will work to track down people responsible for bomb hoaxes. The intelligence unit will find out the criminals and file specific cases to bring them to justice.

The meeting, chaired by State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar, appreciated identification of threatening email senders leading to an end to such practice and observed that identification of people threatening bomb attacks would also stop the scourge.

Heads of the BDR, ansar, National Security Intelligence and field level officials of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligent, Criminal Investigation Department, Detective Branch, Special Branch and police attended the meeting.

Emerging from the meeting,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## GMG air-links Kolkata with Chittagong

M ABDUR RAHIM, back from Kolkata

Kolkata yesterday welcomed the first international flight of Bangladesh's private carrier GMG Airlines that connected the Indian city with Chittagong.

After an hour-long air-dash from Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport, GMG's 37-seater Dash 8-100 aircraft touched Kolkata Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport at 1:00pm (BST) to receive a warm reception by officials of Airport Authority of India, Bangladesh High Commission and a host of Bangladeshis.

Subhash Chakrabarty, minister of transport and youth affairs of West Bengal, had come to receive the inaugural flight, but as the flight delayed an hour, he could not attend the inaugural function at MDB Airport Hotel in Dum Dum.

Beginning with three weekly flights on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday, GMG Airlines has a plan to start daily flights between Chittagong and Kolkata. The fare is fixed at \$89 (one way). Passengers buying two tickets will get one free

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



Living in the metropolis means a daily ordeal for 33-year-old Khadiza Begum, abandoned by her husband with four children to keep. To eke out a living, she slaves away in the open from dawn to dusk breaking bricks into chips for the booming construction sector. Tasli, her second child, left, helps her, besides minding her 18-month old sibling, sleeping in the front. Khadiza earns about Tk 50 a day for her family of five living in a rented shanty at Balurghat Slum in Lalbagh.



Inefficient policing leaves the section of Mirpur Road from New Market to Science Laboratory in traffic jam every day.

## 10 jails run without jailers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten jails of the country are running without a jailer for around six months.

The post of jailer of Chuadanga, Meherpur, Narail, Jhalkathi, Madaripur, Khagrachhari, Chandpur, Netrokona, Thakurgaon and Lalmonirhat jails fell vacant after some of the jailers were promoted to deputy superintendent while some others were given the current charge of jail superintendent.

Staffs said administrative activities of the jails are disrupted due to long absence of the jailer, the administrative head of a jail.

"A jail may run without any

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## Gas runs dry at Tongi factories

### Production cut by 70pc in last 4 months

AKBAR HOSSAIN

About 90 factories in BSCIC area in Tongi have slashed their production about 70 percent because of a gas crisis for the last four months.

Thousands of workers at the gas-run factories have not received wages for three months because of drastic production cuts.

Against this backdrop, one factory has already suspended production and some more are thinking of suspending production from next month, further worsening the sufferings of workers.

"The severe gas crisis has

prompted us to think whether we will continue production from next month," said Abdur Rouf, advisor of Dhaka Ceramics and Sanitary Wares Limited.

"We have been paying wages to our workers for the last three months despite minimum production but it may not be possible from next month," Rouf added.

He pointed out a constant temperature is needed for a ceramic factory to continue its production but currently gas supply has dropped to two pounds per square inch (PSI) against the requirement of 15 PSI.

Narrating the miseries due to

non-receipt of wages for three months, Mokbul Hossain, a worker of National Glass Factory that has suspended production, said, "I can no longer manage two square meals a day." Casting a vain look, Mokbul mentioned he is working in the factory for two years on a monthly wages of Tk 1,200 and blamed the present situation on the gas crisis.

A bewildered Rina Begum, another worker, said: "I don't know what I will do now as I am not getting my wages for the last three months. I could not pay house rents for these

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Verdict on case against Ershad adjourned again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement in the income tax corruption case against former president HM Ershad was adjourned for the third time, as the judge concerned was on leave yesterday.

Judge Rezaul Karim Khan of the Special Court for Dhaka Division was supposed to give his verdict on the case on October 7.

Ershad along with his lawyer Sheikh Serajul Islam appeared before the court at 10:45am yesterday.

The judgement was adjourned twice before for time petitions made by the defence lawyer.

The Bureau of Anti-corruption

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## Unite on one point to oust government

### Urge key opposition leaders at seminar on nat'l security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top leaders of different opposition parties at a seminar in the city yesterday stressed a broad-based united movement with a single objective -- forcing the government to step down -- for what they said is "ruling alliance's absolute failure to govern."

United movement of all opposition parties and professional bodies can free the people from the clutches of the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government and end its misrule, they said.

Jatiya Oikya Mancha (platform for national unity) organised the seminar on "National Unity for National Security" at Mahanagar Natya Mancha, and its chief Dr Kamal Hossain was in the chair.

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil said people are now ready to oust the government but the political leaders are just following them instead of leading them due to their (leaders) meanness. Now is the time to unite in the greater interest of the nation, leaving aside all sorts of narrowness, he said.

The AL leader called upon all

like-minded parties to intensify the oust-government movement simultaneously.

"Let's hold rallies at all divisional headquarters to be addressed by leaders advocating unity from this platform. I am quite confident people will join hands with us to compel the present rulers to quit power," he said.

"The Awami League is not fighting against this government only for power. We are struggling for basic rights and needs of the people."

Jalil asked the like-minded

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Mixed reactions to Morshed remark

### Senior BNP policymakers term comment on India unwise, undiplomatic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreign minister's Tuesday's tough-talking on Delhi gave rise to a wide spectrum of negative reactions yesterday among the majority of policymakers and senior leaders of the ruling BNP, who termed it "most unwise and undiplomatic" act.

They said the tactless blasting might create further misunderstanding and widen the gap between the two governments, leading to degeneration of bilateral relations.

Sources said Foreign Minister Morshed Khan's speech at the inaugural session of an India-

Bangladesh Dialogue of Young Journalists was a much-talked-about subject among the BNP leaders throughout yesterday and the most of them disapproved of such direct attack on India.

Several policymakers speculated that the foreign minister might have been influenced by certain frustrated quarters of the BNP in firing such a broadside at Delhi. They said it would have been wiser of the FM to consult first the policymakers on whether the government wanted to take such a stance against India.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## CTG ARMS HAUL Chargesheeted accused gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chittagong court yesterday granted bail to a chargesheeted accused and released a truck in the April 2 Arms Haul Case, while a smuggling racketeer was sent to Dhaka for interrogation about his suspected links to the same cache.

Acting Judge of Chittagong Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court Mohammad Shahjahan allowed bail to Marium Begum popularly known as Bodhini Begum, member of Bairag Union Parishad in Kamaphuli, on a bond of Tk 10,000.

The court also released the truck, seized about a month after law enforcers busted 10 truckloads of arms and ammunition on Kamaphuli coast.

The court did not hear the supplementary chargesheet submitted on August 26 and the acting judge observed any decision on acceptance or rejection of the chargesheet

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## JS to see stormy debate if AL joins next session

### Opposition lawmakers submit 60 notices for discussion on AL rally bombing; treasury bench ponders short session to skirt the AL heat

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The upcoming parliament session is likely to witness a stormy debate on the August 21 assassination attempt on Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina as opposition lawmakers are demanding a motion to censure the deadly rally attack.

It is not clear whether the main opposition Awami League (AL) will join the 13th session slated for September 12, but its lawmakers are submitting notices to the parliament secretariat for discussion on the attack.

The cascade of notices has prompted the ruling BNP to consider

a short session to avoid the opposition heat.

Parliament secretariat sources said opposition lawmakers have already submitted 109 notices under different provisions of the rules of procedure demanding discussions on a raft of issues.

Of the notices, 60 demand the censure motion, condemning the attack on the AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka that killed 19 people, including the party's Women's Affairs Secretary Ivy Rahman and injured over 200 others.

The AL returned to parliament in last June ending about a year of

continued House boycott and declared that it would continue its participation in all parliamentary proceedings.

But the party is in dilemma over the commitment in the volatile political situation stemming from the August 21 assassination attempt on Hasina, also the chief of the AL.

The AL will take a decision on joining parliament in a couple of days as its policymakers believe the August 21 grisly attack demanded review of their earlier position.

"We have to take an official decision before the beginning of the session," AL General Secretary

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



A security man checks the bag of a student at the entrance to Willes Little Flower School in Kakrail yesterday morning, after Tuesday's bomb hoax that panicked the school staff, students and guardians.

PHOTO: STAR