

Worry over Rab actions

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law-enforcers should shoot him in the leg, not kill him," he stressed.

People now compare Rab actions with the Operation Clean Heart and the police, Bangladesh Rifles joint operations against outlaws in the southwestern region in which a number of innocent people were killed.

Sources said the government gave the elite force the 'green light to kill' and give the killings legal cover with such explanations. The law and order monitoring cell meeting on Wednesday gave a clean chit to the force's action, saying people were 'happy' at their performance.

MYSTERIOUS DEATHS

The first death in Rab custody was of Debashish, an alleged associate of top criminal Pichchi Hannan, arrested in Savar on June 26. He died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) a few hours after his arrest. The body of another associate of Hannan, Nitol, was found in Tejgaon.

The force claimed Hannan was killed in crossfire between Rab men and Hannan's henchmen at Diakhali in Savar on August 6.

Shajahan Ali, 28, a shopkeeper of Rifle Square, died on July 9 in the hospital a few days after his arrest at Jigata.

Mohammad Ali, 65, a deed writer, was allegedly shot dead in his house at Rayerbazar three days later.

Sumon Ahmed Majumder, Tongi Juba League leader and prime witness in the killing of Awami League legislator Ahsanullah Master died in a Tongi hospital on July 16 allegedly from Rab torture during interrogation. Minar and Jumman of Charkuthipara in Kushtia died on July 10 and 19 in a hospital after the battalion arrested them with firearms. Tofazzal Hossain, an old man from Charkuthipara in Kushtia, reportedly died from drowning in a river while he was trying to get away from a Rab team on July 21. Anwar Hossain alias Kankata Ranju, 32, general secretary of ward No. 5 of BNP of Kushtia sadar died in Rab custody on July 24. Imam Sarder alias Hasan Imam, 32, a member of an underground

party and one of the four charged with killing Khulna city Awami League President Manzurul Imam, was killed in a gunfight with the battalion and police near Prasadpur Bridge in Rampal in Bagerhat on August 28. Sheikh Asaduzzaman Litu, prime accused in the killing of Janakantha correspondent Shamsur Rahman Kebol, was killed while trying to flee from Rab custody in Khulna on August 30. A five-year-old girl Mayesha and an alleged arms peddler were killed in a shootout at Sabujbagh on September 2.

Rab men gunned down Mollah Shamim, alleged ringleader of a gang, allegedly when his operatives tried to snatch on September 6.

Raised through a government order of March 1, Rab went into formal operation from June 21 and is working across Bangladesh under seven administrative units.

Expressing grave concern at the deaths, Dr Kamal said, "There should be inquiry into these."

It should be examined whether people responsible for arrests are carrying out their duty within the legal framework, he said.

"We should probe under what circumstances they are dying, whether law-enforcers are applying proper law in arrests."

All, whether they are criminals or not, have the rights of being tried in court and such deaths are depriving society of important information, he said.

President of Supreme Court Bar Association Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud expressed grave concern at the deaths and said the deaths are creating apprehension and raising many questions in the mind of people.

"It's alarming," he said, asking for an immediate end to the trend.

The deaths should be properly investigated as everyone has the right to pray for trial, he said.

Rab Director General Anwarul Iqbal declined to comment on the issue. "I'll not make any comment, contact our public relations section," he said.

Ultimatum of AL

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to-dusk hartal is likely to be enforced this month, sources said.

Details of the ultimatum will be finalised through discussions among senior leaders of the opposition camp before the grand rallies.

Meanwhile, the AL will join the parliament session due to begin on September 12 to protest the grisly grenade attack on its rally on August 21. If the ruling alliance 'behaves irrationally,' the AL will walk out of the House and go for a continued boycott, sources said.

The opposition parties will also hold grand rallies at four divisional headquarters -- Rajshahi, Barisal, Sylhet and Khulna. Besides, programmes including human shield, demonstration and procession are likely to be announced today.

"We (all opposition parties) will hold separate party meetings tomorrow (Friday) evening in Dhaka and simultaneously announce programmes for greater movement to oust the BNP-Jamaat alliance government," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said while addressing a huge public meeting in Chittagong yesterday.

Earlier, 11-party alliance refrained from announcing simultaneous agitation programmes. The AL, Workers Party and JSD observed the nine-day agitation

programmes. The 11-party at its meeting on Tuesday agreed in principle to go for simultaneous programmes.

The AL termed the 11-party decision a development in the one-point movement to topple the government in the wake of the August 21 assassination attempt on AL chief Sheikh Hasina that killed 19.

Two more

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when another Interpol expert Jacqueline Pullum left the city four days ago.

The two spent a busy day visiting major spots and talking with local and Interpol investigators. They also visited the spot on Bangabandhu Avenue and examined the truck kept at Police Control Room at Shahbagh. Grenades were hurled at the truck, which was used as podium by the central AL leaders. Later, the two met the criminal investigations department (CID) officials at the CID headquarters and discussed the progress of the probe. They also examined documents, evidence and latest findings by the investigators.

Sources said CID officials gave a list of 30 criminals from all over the country to the Interpol men.

40 killed in US-led

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insurgents, in an area the US military charges is infested with fighters infiltrating from Syria.

A health official said at least 28 people were killed and 71 wounded from the bombing alone -- the second US-led raid on the town in five days.

However the US army reported up to 57 killed.

Many bodies strewn in the streets could not be collected and Doctor Rabih Yassin accused US troops and the Iraqi national guard of turning back ambulances carrying medical supplies.

The US military said a "large terrorist element" was "displaced local Iraqi security forces" in the area.

"Today, multinational forces and Iraqi security forces initiated operations to eliminate this threat," it said in a statement.

In Fallujah, the greatest symbol of resistance to US occupation in Iraq, jets pounded the city in a relentless series of night-time raids, killing 12 Iraqis, including five children and two women, a doctor said. Nine others were wounded.

At one house flattened by a US missile, an AFP correspondent saw locals drag five bodies out of the rubble and children help retrieve pieces of flesh.

Witnesses said the family who lived in the house was sleeping on the roof when the missile struck, blowing their bodies to smithereens.

US warplanes have pummeled the western city, which the military has classified as a den of foreign terror networks, ever since seven marines and three Iraqi national guardsmen were killed in a car

Maya's youngest son remanded again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday remanded Rashedul Hossain Chowdhury Rony, son of Awami League leader Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, in police custody for a second phase of two days.

Uttara police produced Rony before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at 4:00pm on completion of a two-day remand, seeking further remand for five days.

In the remand prayer, the IO (investigation officer) said he gathered important information from Rony during interrogation and needs to quiz him more.

The defence lawyers submitted a petition seeking bail and cancellation of the remand prayer. They said the charges brought against Rony were false and fabricated. He was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy, as his name was not in the FIR (first information report), they added.

After hearing both the sides, Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiq Anwar rejected the bail petition and remanded Rony for two days.

Police showed Rony arrested in a robbery case filed against his elder brother Dipu Chowdhury. Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Rony from his Baily Road billiard club on September 5.

Unite against

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Earlier in the day, the six student organisations at a meeting at Col Taher Auditorium decided to start a united student movement against terrorism and fundamentalist forces following the current agitation of the mainstream opposition.

They have chalked out a 10-day programme. The programmes include joint protest rally on Dhaka University campus on Sept 11, countrywide procession and rallies on Sept 14 and laying siege to the education ministry to press for cancellation of the Muniruzzaman Education Commission on Sept 16.

They will observe anti-communalism day on Sept 20 to mark the death anniversary of Jobayer Chowdhury Rimu, a Chhatra Moitry leader of Rajshahi University.

AL unlikely

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parliamentary seat, which fell vacant after the death of AL legislator Abdul Momin, the main opposition now mulls over the boycott of the by-polls.

The AL took part in Netrakona-3 by-polls last year, changing its stance not to compete in any by-election under the coalition government.

Before Gazipur-2 by-polls, the AL had decided to take part in the by-polls to the parliamentary seats they bagged in 2001 general elections.

In accordance with that decision, the AL took part in Gazipur-2 by-election and boycotted Dhaka-10, Munshiganj-1 and Kushtia-1 by-polls.

Buddhadev

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The police said the cadres of People's War Group (PWG) plotted an attack on Buddhadev's convoy and planted four landmines on the route to the meeting venue of the Bidi Workers' Union, 150 kilometres off Kolkata.

Villagers alerted Officer-in-Charge Sanjay Chakrabarty of Ranbadh Police Station to the probable attack, prompting him to rush to the scene and remove the landmines to the relief of the police administration.

The intelligence bureau usually checks any route before the chief minister takes it, but officials failed to provide information about the PWG plan this time. Police are yet to trace the 11 PWG cadres believed to have holed up in the area.

Buddhadev is on the hit lists of both PWG and MCC (Maoist Communist Centre). Yesterday, he travelled by train to Durgapur before he changed over into a car.

According to information from police sources, the four landmines could have destroyed a large part of the road and several cars.

Cricket

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In the other match, debutants United States play New Zealand at The Oval in London.

The 50-over contest against the English county side will be the Tigers' second and final official practice match after their 70-run win over the Americans on Monday.

But Bangladesh's real test comes when they take on South Africa on September 12 at Edgbaston. Their second Pool B game in the meet is against West Indies on September 15 at the Rose Bowl, home of Hampshire Country Cricket Club.

The practice match will allow coach Dav Whatmore a chance to assess the fitness of all-rounder Musfiqur Rahman, who has been absent since breaking down during the first tour game against Ireland last month.

Besides, young paceman Nazmul Hossain, one of the three players picked from the recent Under-19 tour of England, is likely to feature in the match after sustaining a finger injury in one of the build up games.

The Tigers without their captain Habibul Bashar, who has recently undergone surgery in Australia on his broken right thumb, has been moderately successful preparation for the Trophy.

Their only disappointment came in a high-scoring encounter against Scotland, who pulled off a last ball victory chasing Bangladesh's 259 in the second practice match on September 3.

Bangladesh loses

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His funeral will be held in Fort Collins on September 17 and he will be buried with national honour at Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, USA.

His love and respect for Bangladesh is reflected in his last wish, as he told his relatives, friends and admirers in the USA and elsewhere to donate funds to a charity foundation in Bangladesh instead of sending flowers and gifts to his family.

His book *The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh* is an account of the emergence of the country seen through the eyes of a sympathetic American diplomat in Dhaka since the devastating cyclone of 1970 to the Liberation War in 1971.

Blood glorifies Bangladesh's struggle for independence "as a statement of admiration for all those who in their own way helped transform a seemingly forlorn dream into bright, shining reality."

Before working in the then East Pakistan, Blood served in the US Missions as diplomat in Greece, Germany and Afghanistan.

He also held important desk positions in the State Department in Washington. After his term expired in Dhaka, he served the State Department in various capacities and became a deputy commander for international affairs in the US Army War College in 1974.

After serving two terms as chargé d'affaires in US Mission in New Delhi, Blood retired in 1992. He was a diplomat in residence and professor of political science in 1982-90 and also a professor emeritus at Allegheny College, USA. He had a master's degree in international relations from George Washington University. He had served as guest lecturer at a number of universities and institutes in the US and has published several articles in

different US journals.

Sammilita Sangskritik Jote in a condolence message said, "We're deeply shocked at the death of Mr Archer K Blood, a true friend of Bangladesh and its people."

Bangladesh cannot repay the favours Blood has done to it. We still remember with gratitude how fearlessly he spoke and wrote the truth against the ruthless Pakistani junta in 1971, it added.

The statement further said Blood proved his courage many times when he insisted on revealing the truth even though his own government was supporting the Pakistani junta for reasons of realpolitik.

It went on to say that people read with pleasure *The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh*, which reveals not only his scholarship but also his rigid adherence to truth.

Veteran freedom fighters Nasiruddin Yusuf, Shahidullah Khan, Habibul Alam, Bir Protik, Fateh Ali Chowdhury, Maj (ret'd) Akhter Ahmed, Bir Protik, Minu Huq, Shahudul Huq, Gazi Golam Dastagir, Bir Protik, Nayla Khan and Shahadat Chowdhury in a joint statement paid glowing tributes to him.

"We strongly believe Blood's family has the courage to bear this irreparable loss," the statement added.

Pakistan kills

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nearby Shakai valley.

The June raids left at least 65 militants and 18 soldiers dead.

Hundreds of al-Qaeda fugitives slipped into the region after a US-led military offensive ousted their former Taliban hosts in Afghanistan in late 2001.

Jalil hints at crippling

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and around the meeting venue and atop buildings surrounding it. Besides, Detective Branch of police using metal detectors checked people including pressmen and some AL leaders as they entered the main meeting venue.

The AL general secretary blamed the government for the August 21 grenade attack and questioned its sincerity in investigating the grisly incident.

"Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, instead of immediately going for investigations into the incident, had squandered two days and played a drama of discussion to divert public attention," Jalil alleged.

He reiterated his party's rejection of the one-man judicial probe body formed by the government. "The judge heading it is a BNP-backed person and hence we don't have any confidence in him," he said. "We won't recognise any probe body controlled by this government."

Speakers at the meeting included AL central leaders Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury, Sajeda Chowdhury, Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu, Chittagong AL leaders MA Mannan, Mosharraf Hossain and Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu.

Bangladesh costliest

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Enforcing a commercial contract is also difficult in Bangladesh, the cost of which is 21.3 percent of debt as against an average 10.8 percent in the OECD nations.

Among all the world's regions, the cost of firing workers is also the highest in South Asia -- on an average, it takes 86 weeks of wage in severance, penalties and notifications to dismiss a worker.

In this case, too, Bangladesh holds a much better position, as firing of a worker here costs 47 weeks' salary, compared to 40.4 weeks in OECD countries.

Among the regional countries only India, Pakistan and Bangladesh get a place in the list of 58 countries that reformed business regulations.

No economy in the region ranked in the top quartile of 145 countries on ease of doing business. The report put Bangladesh in the second best quartile.

The report found entrepreneurs in poor countries face more regulatory burdens than in the rich countries, making it doubly hard than rich nations for them to start, operate or

Mayor and General Secretary of city AL ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury was in the chair.

UNB adds: Tofail Ahmed said democracy is not safe in the hands of the Khaleda government as, he said, it always feels its obligation is to patronise the killers. "This government rewarded the killers of Bangabandhu and obstructed their trial at the Supreme Court," he added.

"This is a government of killers. It must be ousted, and for that we have launched one-point movement," Tofail told the rally.

Sajeda Chowdhury said the BNP-Jamaat government has banished non-communal democratic politics. It will be removed through all-out mass movement, she said.

JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu said the October 1, 2001 general election that brought BNP-Jamaat coalition to power was a "political disaster" as the country has now plunged into a deep crisis under its rule.

"With the staging of the August 21 grenade attacks, the country has virtually been thrown into a war. Since a war does not go by any rule, we will have to win the one-point movement against the Khaleda-Nizami regime at any cost," Inu said.

close a business. Heavy regulation and weak property rights exclude the poor, specially the women and younger people, from doing business in the poor economies.

"Heavy regulation not only fails to protect women, young people and the poor -- those it was intended to serve -- but often harms them," observed Carolee Mc Liesh, one of the authors of the report.

Army to help

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effectively in the aftermath of the bomb attacks, the latest being the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally that killed 19 people.

The armed forces division will decide on assistance depending on the nature of future threats, but any field-level assistance did not come up at the meeting, the sources said.

Yesterday's meeting discussed skills and capabilities of the police to tackle bomb attacks and threats and future meetings will decide on capacity-building measures after pinpointing flaws in the police.

BNPPP to witness

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April this year after a few sittings.

"Issues like man-made national disasters, security problem and terrorism might figure in the meeting," said Mahbubur Rahman, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry.

At the previous meetings held on March 21 and April 25, some deputies expressed dissatisfaction at the performance of some ministries including home and commerce for their failure to combat crime and contain price hike of essentials. They also demanded trimming of the cabinet.

Syed Manjur Hossain, chairman of a parliamentary standing committee, said lawmakers would also

discuss the political situation. "Of course, we will ask the government to take proper steps to tackle the situation," he told The Daily Star.

"Lawmakers of the party are likely to come down heavily on some ministers for their poor whipmanship," said a ruling party whip, requesting anonymity.

Khulna

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object, which turned out to be a can of 'jarda' filled with dust.

Deputy Commissioner (South) Akbar Ali of Khulna Metropolitan Police said a clique of criminals is trying to create panic among educational institutes. "We're probing the incident," he said.

Two NGO staff buy freedom in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Two NGO (non-government organisation) officials abducted earlier were brought to Ghagra zone army headquarters yesterday after ransoming the abductors Wednesday night at Thandachhari jungle beside Rangamati-Chittagong highway.

Evaluation Officer Santosh Kumar Dey and Credit-in-Charge Apu De Costa of Community Health Care Project (CHCP) are now undergoing treatment at the army health centre for critical illness caused during their 4-day captivity, army sources said.

The captives were released after paying ransom of Tk 5 lakh through negotiators. But the NGO officials declined to comment on the deal, local sources said.

Unidentified gunmen abducted them on September 4 from remote Bottoli area in Kolompti union when after a surprise visit to an ongoing project there, they were returning to the CHCP sub-office in Kawkhali upazila. The abductors in a letter demanded Tk 10 lakh for their release, police said.

Army and police forces were to start a rescue operation following the abduction but the NGO's high-ups preferred starting a negotiation with the captors. Later, local indigenous leaders taking up the matter reached the captors and eventually managed to release the captives, local sources added.

The duty officer of Kawkhali Police Station however told journalists yesterday that they heard abductors were given a handsome amount but there was no evidence.

Threat letter sent to MP, Ctg admin, journo

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A letter sent to a journalist yesterday threatened to kill a BNP lawmaker, the deputy commissioner of Khagrachhari and all newspersons in Rangamati and to blow up important government and non-government establishments here.

The letter demanded suspension of Rangamati and Khagrachhari municipality polls slated for October 6 and 7 by September 20. Otherwise, BNP legislator Wadood Bhuiyan and the DC of Khagrachhari will be killed, it reads.

Abdul Hamid, elderly journalist and member of the local press club, found the letter inside his shop in Talabchhari. The sender identified himself as Iqbal Murda and claimed to be a 'major' of their forces.

"We're here to organise our forces. We'll later move to Dhaka or Sylhet when our operations are carried out here," the letter said.

The letter also threatened to blow up the house of Moniswapan Dewan, deputy minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs, the offices and houses of the DC and superintendent of police of Rangamati, district jail, press club, government boys and girls schools and different market places.

Deputy Commissioner Dr Jafar Ahmed Khan admitted this and said, "I directed law enforcers to beef up security measures and remain vigilant to check such elements."

Charges pressed

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Tallabagh in a week, police said.

Tracking down Dipu through the email, police arrested him at his house on New Elephant Road on August 31 and seized his personal computer that, police claimed, carried his links to the crime.

Instructed by police, Dipu asked his accomplice Wahid to go to Sat Masjid Road where they arrested him.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Shahadat Hossain of Dhanmondi Police Station filed a case against them under the Speedy Trial Act (Law and Order Disruption) the same day.

Police also took them on a five-day remand. The investigation officer (IO) SI Julfikar Ali submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

The IO showed nine persons as prosecution witnesses in the charge sheet and mentioned that the charges brought against the two were primarily proved.

He also collected 13 items of evidence during the investigation.

Outlaw leader

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Bamandanga and Robin Gain and Chandni Gain of village Hetalbania in Assassuni upazila.

According to police, the villagers chased and caught the six operatives of the underground outfit when they came to village Bamandanga at about 11:pm to collect tolls.

They beat Damudar Mondal dead and injured five others. Assassuni police rushed to he spot, rescued the injured and sent them to Satkhira Hospital. They also recovered Damudar's body and sent it to the hospital for autopsy.

A case was lodged with Assassuni Police Station.

Space capsule

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Roger Wiens of Los Alamos National Laboratory. "This just wasn't supposed to happen. We're going to have a lot of work picking up the pieces."

The capsule held billions of charged atoms a total haul no bigger than a few grains of salt that were harvested from solar wind on five collecting disks during the 884-day, \$260-million mission.

Roy Haggard, who took part in the initial reconnaissance of the capsule, said the capsule's shell had been breached about three inches and the science canister inside appeared to have a small break.

The inner canister was flown to the Army's air field at the proving ground and put in a clean room, a work area in which the air quality, temperature and humidity are highly regulated to prevent contamination.

The reconstruction was expected to take several days, and scientists were hopeful they could salvage the embedded atoms among the twisted platters of exotic metals and silicone.

"This is something that's not a total disaster," said Carlton Allen, astromaterials curator for the Houston-based Johnson Space Center. "We didn't lose all the science in the crash."

Nasa planned to appoint a "mishap review board" to determine a cause for the failure. Flight engineers say a set of tiny explosives didn't trigger the capsule's parachutes, although the fact that all explosives failed pointed to another cause.

The spacecraft was designed and built by Lockheed Martin Space Systems near Denver. Robert Corwin, an engineer for the company, said a battery that overheated shortly after the 2001 launch could be a culprit.

The mishap also raised questions about the durability of another Nasa sample-return capsule called Stardust, due to land here in 2006. But that capsule was built to be more rugged and will land on its own with a parachute.

Scientists got their first glimpse of the damage when the Genesis

capsule was wheeled into a garage bay late Wednesday. The capsule's inner canister was all but unrecognizable, although scientists thought they saw some unbroken parts holding the atoms.

The space capsule had been outside the earth's magnetic shield for three years, collecting solar wind particles that could explain how the sun formed an estimated 4.5 billion years ago and what keeps it fueled.