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BOMB THREAT

WB Country
Director
leaves Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition parties, including the Awami League (AL), announced three weeks of simultaneous demonstrations from September 12 including a grand rally in Dhaka as part of their oust-government movement.

The demonstrations also announced by 11 left parties, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party (NAP) include formation of human shields, march to parliament, rallies in district headquarters and demonstration in Dhaka and other cities.

The simultaneous announcement of the agitation marked the left coalition's return to the oust-government movement after days of intra-group wrangling over the agenda and strategy of the movement.

Jubo League
leader hurt in
Aug 21 grenade
attack dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Kalam Azad, a city Jubo League leader and one of the victims of the August 21 grenade attack on Awami League (AL) rally, died at a city hospital yesterday, raising the death toll to 20.

As part of the programmes, the opposition parties will march to the Jatiya Sangsads tomorrow, the opening day of the 13th session of the Jatiya Sangsads and form a human shield from Tongi to Narayanganj.

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MORSHED'S COMMENTS

Delhi summons
envoy, expresses
dismay

STAR REPORT

India yesterday expressed its "surprise and dismay" over the remarks by Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan at a recent seminar of journalists in Dhaka.

Our Delhi Correspondent Pallab Bhattacharya says, Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran summoned Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Hemayetuddin to the External Affairs Ministry and asked him to

convey to Dhaka that Morshed's remarks "could have a negative impact on bilateral relations and on the spirit of goodwill and friendship that has hitherto characterized these relations."

A statement issued by the spokesperson of Indian External Affairs Ministry said Morshed made the remarks in the presence of diplomats, including the Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh.

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Food for Work
scheme starts a
month ahead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to start a Food for Work (FFW) programme from the current month advancing the schedule by one month considering the plight of the poor due to the month-long deluge.

A high official in the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management said the local administration is already asked to start the programme from September instead of October, the normal time for the FFW programme to start.

The ministry allocated 40,000 tonnes of rice and Tk 65 crore in the first phase for starting the FFW programme immediately, the source said.

Of these, 30,000 tonnes of rice is allocated for 42 flood-hit districts and 10,000 tonnes for the rest of the districts. Tk 65 crore has been allocated for those flood-hit districts and Tk 20 crore for the rest.

The government allocates both food and money for the programme this year to get an idea which is more effective, the official said. It was observed in the past that the FFW programme was dissipated due to corruption in the local administration.

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Youth arrested
with bombs
in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A youth was arrested with four bombs from a house in the city yesterday, police said.

The arrested was identified as Biplob Biswas, an activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

A bomb disposal team of Kotwali police recovered the bombs and nabbed Biplob while he was packing the explosives in packets of sweetmeats. The team defused the bombs.

Witnesses said local people and owner of the house on Sreemati Chatterjee lane found Biplob along with the bombs under the ground floor staircase of the building. They caught him and informed police.

A case was lodged with Kotwali police under the explosives act and the arrested was being quizzed.

Biplob however denied possessing the bombs, saying he was nabbed as he was passing by the house and stopped to see a crowd.

City and district units of the BCL claimed the bomb recovery was a stage-managed drama to implicate BCL and its activist Biplob in the case as part of a political conspiracy.

JCD activist
stabbed to
death in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was stabbed to death in the city yesterday.

The victim, Zakir Hossain, 30, came under attack at about 4:30pm, while he was taking rest at the residence of Ali Akbar alias Jashim, a painter, at Chunnu Miah's colony in the city's Kalbukhni area.

A gang of four reached the spot by two motorbikes and asked Zakir to get out of the room. As he declined, they dragged him out of the room and stabbed in different parts of his body.

The assailants left the spot, leaving Zakir in a pool of blood. Zakir was rushed to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Son of late Mokhbul Hossain of Bagbari area of Chhatak upazila headquarters, Zakir was a close associate of Ward Commissioner Abdul Kadir Shomru.

The reason behind the murder could not be known. Shomru was preparing to file a case against Rab.

VHP vows to do an
Ayodhya re-run
in Maharashtra

REUTERS, Mumbai

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) plans to pull down the controversial tomb of a 17th century Muslim general tomorrow, in a grim echo of the 1992 razing of a mosque that sparked some of India's worst religious riots.

Thousands of police personnel have been deployed around the tomb near Mahabaleshwar, a hill resort about 250 km from Mumbai, to prevent communal violence as tensions rise ahead of Maharashtra

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Opposition to start simultaneous agitation tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mainstream opposition parties, including the Awami League (AL), announced three weeks of simultaneous demonstrations from September 12 including a grand rally in Dhaka as part of their oust-government movement.

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Awami Party (NAP) include formation of human shields, march to parliament, rallies in district headquarters and demonstration in Dhaka and other cities.

The simultaneous announcement of the agitation marked the left coalition's return to the oust-government movement after days of intra-group wrangling over the agenda and strategy of the movement.

As part of the programmes, the opposition parties will march to the Jatiya Sangsads tomorrow, the opening day of the 13th session of the Jatiya Sangsads and form a human shield from Tongi to Narayanganj.

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JIC to quiz TNT smugglers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The three men including two Indians snared Thursday by border guards for sneaking into Bangladesh through Noakot border with plastic explosives were sent to the capital yesterday afternoon to be quizzed by the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC).

Earlier, in the morning, police produced them before a magistrate's court in the northeastern divisional headquarters of Sylhet with a prayer for 15 days' remand. The court granted a 10-day one.

Border security sources said Kalaganj confessed to BDR interrogators that they had been engaged in smuggling contraband items into Bangladesh across the border for long.

This time they were instructed to

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Interpol team inspects Hasina's car

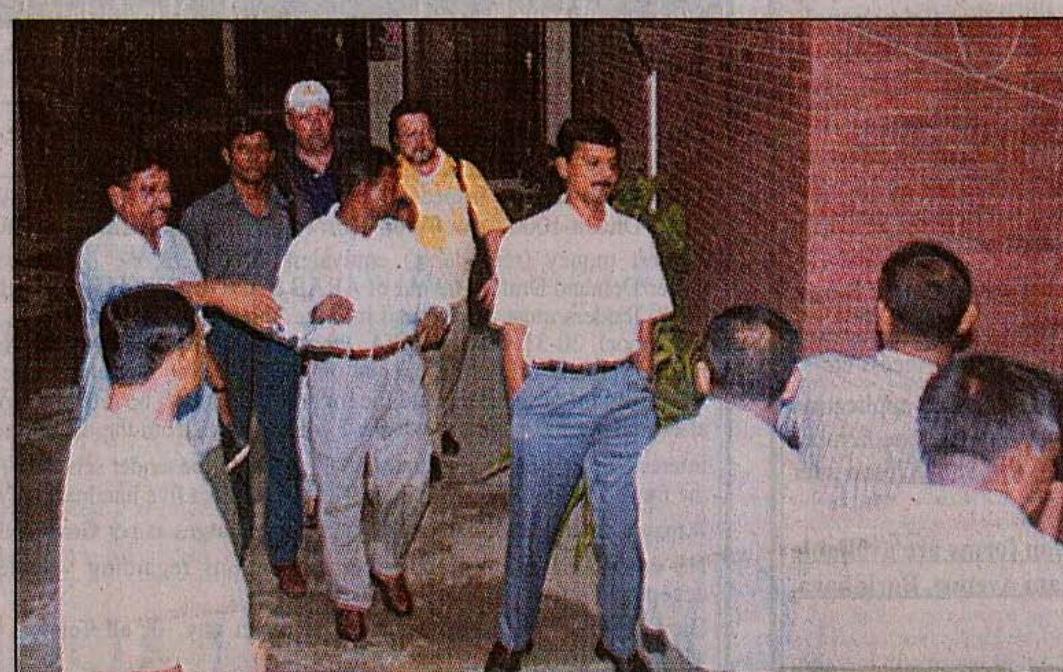
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Interpol investigators yesterday examined the vehicle of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina that received several bullet- and grenade splinter-hits on August 21.

Meanwhile, an Interpol team member, terrorism expert Xin Hu, left Bangladesh Thursday night. His colleagues -- fire tool-mark examiner Robert Thompson, explosives enforcement officer Frev Bredford, public safety and security specialist Marash Vuclaj and public safety and terrorism expert Jeffery Eyles -- will carry on with the probe.

Yesterday, for the first time in its nearly two-week stay in Dhaka, the Lyon-based International Criminal Police Organisation team went to

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Interpol experts visit Sudha Sadan in Dhanmondi yesterday to examine the bullet-riddled car of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina who escaped an assassination attempt on August 21.

PHOTO: STAR

Jubo League leader shot dead in India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Unknown assailants gunned down a Jubo League leader on Tentulia Bridge in Sivarupnagar thana of 24 Parganas in West Bengal Thursday night.

Victim Khan Alamgir Kabir alias Alam, 38, general secretary of Dumuria unit Jubo League and also second-in-command of outlawed New Biplob Communist Party (NBCP), was a listed top criminal, Khulna police said.

Alam, son of Jahatap Khan and chairman of Gutudia Union Parishad, was killed as he was about to board a train bound for Kolkata at 11:30pm.

A leading Kolkata daily said Alam and his wife Nasrin Alam with two children were hiding in a rented house in Muchkundupur village in 24 Parganas for the last two months. Police held two suspects, as learnt from Indian electronic media ET.

Alam was charge-sheeted accused of six murders, two abduction and eight other criminal charges, police said, adding he was sentenced for life in 2001 in an arms case.

Police said Alam was the prime charge-sheeted accused in Molla Sirajul Islam murder case. Sirajul, general secretary of district unit Jubo Dal, was killed last year.

Son of a farmer, Alam joined the Jubo League in 1986 as a worker and became its general secretary in 1997. He joined the NBCP the same year.

The superintendent of police of Khulna said Alam earned huge money by extorting the shrimp farmers in Dumuria and Batiaghata, robbery and abduction.

Before his escape to India, Alam was in possession of huge arms and ammunition and evaded arrest by joint forces thrice, getting advance information over cellphone from his beneficiaries in Dumuria Police Station, reliable sources said.

In the two countries, the Americans are between two fires: if they remain there they will bleed to death, and if they withdraw they will have lost everything."

Zawahiri said that armed Islamists he described as al-Qaeda's Mujahideen had foiled US forces in Iraq and left them hiding in the trenches in Afghanistan.

The US death toll in Iraq hit the 1,000 mark earlier this week as American troops battle a deadly insurgency that has also set its

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Customs revenue flags for soaring writ petitions

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN, back from Chittagong

Revenue collection by the Chittagong Customs House is dropping by Tk 5 crore to 7 crore a day because of filing of a large number of writ petitions with the High Court challenging tax officials' valuation of imported goods.

Top officials of the customs house said about 10 writ petitions were being filed a day and 9,376 cases involving over Tk 600 crore revenue were pending before the court since 1991. Of the petitions, 426 were filed this year.

Customs officials follow a har-

monised system of commodity description code, commonly known as HS Code, to calculate tax of any item on the basis of the government's duty structure specified for each item.

In case of any disagreement on the valuation, aggrieved importers can file appeals with the commissioner or the Appellate Tribunal for imported goods.

"But most importers like filing writ petitions with the High Court, often to get stay on an interim order that directs the customs house to release the goods," said Deputy Commissioner of Customs Syed Moshfequr Rahman.

He said importers often pray for immediate release of their goods, citing the 'risk of financial loss' in case of delay. They also submit a bank guarantee assuring the parties of paying off in case the verdict goes against them.

The cases keep piling up as the customs officials find it difficult to quickly act on the court directives, as they have to submit their explanations through the attorney general's office, Moshfequr Rahman.

"In case of filing a civil miscellaneous petition with the Supreme Court we have to go through the solicitor's wing under the Ministry of Finance," he said.

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Ahmedy and his two accomplices were killed in a shootout with Rab at about 9:00 last night, sources said. Rab said Ahmedy did not die, but was critically injured in crossfire.

In another drive on the same day, members of the elite force nabbed Shibir cadre Md Ramzan alias 'Bhagina' Ramzan, with one AK-47 assault rifle in Fatiaghari of the district.

Sources said a Rab team nabbed Ahmedy and his 10 accomplices when they were coming out of Aeochia Union Parishad (UP) office at Deodighirpar under Satkania upazila. Ahmedy is the incumbent chairman of the union parishad.

They were going to a workers' rally of Satkania BNP in South Dhaka.

A former cadre of Jamaat-e-Islami, Ahmedy was wanted in over 15 criminal cases. He was also reportedly evading 17-year rigorous imprisonment (RI) awarded in an arms case before he joined the ruling BNP in July this year.

Eight of the 10 arrested accomplices of Ahmedy have been

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Rab nabs Ctg top terror

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Ahmedul Haq Chowdhury alias Ahmedy, a top-notch criminal of the district, and his 10 accomplices in Satkania yesterday.

Ahmedy and his two accomplices were killed in a shootout with Rab at about 9:00 last night, sources said. Rab said Ahmedy did not die, but was critically injured in crossfire.

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Blazing start for NZ

SPORTS REPORTER

New Zealand posted a thumping 210-run victory in their opening ICC Champions Trophy match against the USA at the Oval in London yesterday.

The Kiwi total broke the previous Champions Trophy record of 316-5 amassed by South Africa against Kenya in Colombo 2002.

Elsewhere, hosts England had

wickets.