

Simultaneous anti-govt

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on September 18.

The AL shifted its Paltan Maidan grand rally of September 29 to October 3 where Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina will address.

The opposition movement is aimed at dislodging the fundamentalists-allied Khaleda Zia administration from power for what they say are the ruling coalition's failure to deliver and patronisation of Islamic extremism.

They also accused the ruling coalition of the August 21 grenade attacks on an AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka that killed 200 people and wounded over 200 others.

Declaring the programmes from a press conference at the party's Dhanmondi office, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said: "The parties that believe in democratic and non-communal politics have joined hands to force the present government from power and establish a secular government steeped in the Liberation War spirit."

He said the details of the agitation timetable would be announced later.

Replying to a question, Jalil said the AL would not participate in the upcoming Netrakona-2 by-polls.

"We are waging a movement for the fall of the government and will not participate in the polls under it,"

The main opposition will, however, join parliament tomorrow for what Jalil said was to protest the assassination attempt on Hasina, also president of the AL.

The 11-party fixed the programmes after a meeting at the Gono Forum office yesterday evening with Pankaj Bhattacharya in the chair. The left alliance meeting also extended support to the October 6 strike at all mills and factories called by Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parishad (SCOP).

The AL synchronised its agitation programmes with the 11-party alliance's after talks by telephone yesterday evening.

The opposition parties place emphasis on mass mobilisation for the one-point oust-government movement in the fresh programmes, political analysts say.

Other programmes of the three-week agitation are countrywide

protests on September 14 and marches across Bangladesh the next day. Human shields would be formed at the upazila level on September 19 and at district level on September 20.

On September 21, the parties will stage separate demonstrations in Dhaka and other cities.

The AL will hold a grand rally in Mymensingh on September 22 and the other in Sylhet on September 24. From September 25 to 28, senior leaders of the main opposition will fan out across Bangladesh to drum up support for the anti-government agitation.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), a constituent of the left alliance, said: "We have announced the programme in collaboration with the Awami League after discussions."

"It's a good sign that the 11-party alliance that did not join the last nine-day programme, closes ranks with us. We'll keep up the one-point movement to oust the government unitedly," said JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu.

Inu stressed formation of a coordination committee bringing together leaders of the opposition parties staging simultaneous agitation against the government.

"It's important to keep the unity that we have already fashioned after the August 21 carnage at the Awami League rally and such a coordination committee is necessary to go ahead unitedly to force the BNP-Jamaat-led fundamentalist government from office."

Blazing start

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reached 198-5 off 38 overs when rain stopped play in their Pool D fixture against Zimbabwe at Edgbaston, Birmingham.

All Champions Trophy matches come complete with a reserve day and if the game cannot be completed Friday it will carry on from where it ended on Saturday.

Today India, co-holders of the trophy after 2002's washed-out final against Sri Lanka in Colombo, begin the defence of their title against Kenya at the Rose Bowl in Southampton.

BTTB plans

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cific flights. Police conducted massive search at Zia International Airport in the capital, Shahjalal Airport in Sylhet, Arts Faculty Building of Dhaka University and Senakalyan Bhaban in the wake of bomb threats by anonymous people.

Some newspaper offices also received bomb threats recently.

"We are concerned at this type of phone calls as the law enforcing agencies do not have any mechanism to retrieve callers identity in case of any hoax call," said a top police official. The matter has been brought to the notice of the home ministry for necessary action, he added.

The home ministry asked the BTTB to introduce phones with caller ID.

Many strategic places and key installations such as airports, police stations, radio and television centres do not have caller ID phones.

Telephone subscribers could avoid unsolicited phone calls once the CLIP is introduced. Currently, private cell phone operators provide this facility.

BTTB officials said now they have such facility at different new exchanges. But some old exchanges lack the facility. French telecom equipment manufacturer Alcatel had installed those exchanges.

"It was difficult to upgrade those exchanges due to non-availability of required equipment. But later the company (Alcatel) agreed to provide necessary equipment," the BTTB chairman said.

Aclatel has reportedly stopped production of equipment necessary to upgrade old exchanges.

Telephone exchanges installed by Japanese NEC Corporation could not be equipped with caller ID due to lack of provisions for upgradation of software, the chairman said.

The BTTB now provides caller ID for new telephone connections under some specific exchanges mainly installed by Turkish equipment manufacturer Netas.

Food for Work

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The local administration will take the project after approval by a local FFW committee comprising the local member of parliament and elite of the society. But if the project-cost is above Tk 50,000, it will have to go through tender, the official explained.

The first phase allocation is given for constructing and repairing of roads, bridges, culverts and other village infrastructures.

The programme will be implemented as part of the government's ongoing flood rehabilitation effort generating job opportunities for the jobless villagers and destitute women.

The government will allocate both food and money in all four phases of the programme that will continue throughout the year in all 64 districts of the country.

The government has a total allocation of one lakh tonnes of wheat, 95,000 tonnes of rice and Tk 168 crore for implementing the programme in the current financial year.

Besides, the disaster management ministry yesterday allocated 11,000 bundle of corrugated iron roofs for rebuilding and repairing damaged houses.

Jubo League

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he died at around 9:00am yesterday, struggling for life for 20 days.

Sirajul Islam, younger brother of Azad, received his body from Dhaka Medical College Hospital after autopsy yesterday evening.

According to an official of the centre, Azad was operated upon three times since his admission.

"He was in critical condition since he suffered injuries and was losing consciousness frequently," said the victim's brother-in-law Mizanur Rahman.

Namaj-e-janaza of the deceased was held in front of the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue where a large number of people assembled.

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil visited the house of Azad in Barantek area under Cantonment Police Station.

Azad left behind his wife and two sons.

Rab nabs Ctg

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Joint Secretary General of the ruling BNP Goyeshwar Chandra Roy was the chief guest at that joining ceremony, while BNP Chittagong (South) district President Ahmad Khalil Khan, BNP Chittagong (North) district General Secretary Shahjahan Siraj and the party's Chittagong city unit Joint-secretary Abu Sufian were special guests. Satkania upazila BNP President AZM Moinalul Haq Chowdhury presided.

Meanwhile, in another drive, Rab members arrested notorious Shibir cadre Md Ramzan alias Bhagina Ramzan with AK-47 assault gun from Narayanhat under Fatikchhari upazila at around 3.30pm.

Bhagina Ramzan is the second-in-command of Jamaat-Shibir backed Nasir Bahini, a criminal gang based in Fatikchhari.



Members of Kranti Shilpi Goshthi, a cultural organisation, simulate death in a human chain at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday to protest a spate of bomb and grenade attacks that sent jitters across Bangladesh.

Jakarta was warned

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Prime Minister John Howard insists Australia's 850 troops in and around Iraq will stay for the foreseeable future. Opposition leader Mark Latham wants to bring them home by Christmas.

In Canberra yesterday, Howard said those responsible could mount another attack.

"The intelligence agencies have warned that there is the possibility of another attack of this kind in Jakarta. The information they have available indicates that the number of operatives ... is sufficiently large to support the fear that there could be another attack," he told reporters.

Meanwhile, Canberra yesterday rammed up security measures fearing more attacks.

The strike left a large crater outside the embassy, tore off the glass fronts of surrounding office towers and left the twisted remains of motorcycles, cars and a truck strewn around the main road outside the embassy compound.

Police said a suicide bomber in a mini-van was responsible.

"According to witnesses, the bomb was in a car that we have

identified as a green Daihatsu Zebra. It exploded right away so we have assumed the perpetrator was still in the car," Suyitno Landung, head of the police criminal investigation department, told El Shinta radio station.

Jemaah Islamiah used suicide attackers to carry out a bombing at the JW Marriott Hotel in Jakarta last year and also strikes on nightclubs in Bali in 2002 that killed 202 people, including 88 Australians and dozens of Indonesians.

Part of the street, one of Jakarta's busiest, was blocked off. Two nearby buildings were wrapped in blue plastic to prevent glass from broken windows falling on pedestrians.

"I'm advised that the bomb here was larger than the bomb used in Bali. But of course you cannot make comparisons in the sense that 202 people were killed in Bali," said Downer, who visited the site earlier after arriving with a team of bomb experts.

Police have pointed the finger specifically at Azahari Husin, a fugitive Malaysian bomb-making expert and JI member believed to have made the bombs used in the Marriott and Bali blasts.

TNT smugglers

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This time they were instructed to carry the explosives to one Giasuddin of Balichar area in Companyganj upazila headquarters, the sources quoted the teenager, who claimed to be a poor daylabourer, as saying.

The boy was quoted to say, "A man named Onindra of the border area near Bholaganj stone quarry hired me Thursday morning for Tk 200 to take the packets to Giasuddin," adding, "I don't know him [Giasuddin] personally but heard him to be a rich businessman."

Kalaganju reportedly said he had joined the smuggling racket two months ago and that they, besides some other groups, had smuggled other consignments of various goods in the past for Gias.

The boy also informed the BDR officials that, before him, two stone quarry labourers named Sahlien and Diliip of Companyganj were also engaged in the racket.

But the two Indians had a different tale.

To the interrogators they said, on receiving the death news of a kin, they were coming to visit their relatives in Kalaidek village under Compnayganj upazila, and claimed Kalaganju joined them while crossing the border.

Asked why then were the packets of explosives found in his umbrella, Suresh again passed the buck on Kalaganju saying the boy gave it to him to carry.

Sources said, in face of interrogation, Suresh and Chandan frequently looked horns with each other at Fakirtla BDR Camp in Chhatak. The pair also kept mum to a number of queries, they added.

On Thursday night, police and intelligence agencies searched for Gias at different places in Companyganj and Chhatak, but could not trace him. Locals said the man is a dealer in stone.

Meanwhile, Sylhet Kotwali police picked up two men, Azizur Rahman and Abdul Motaleb, yesterday afternoon from Shibganj in the city for interrogation in the case. A police source said the two have business connections with Bholaganj stone quarry, the reported origin of the deadly explosives.

Customs revenue

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of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs which delays the entire process," he added.

He said if they could directly go to the attorney general's office, the process would be expedited.

Kazi Mostafizur Rahman, deputy commissioner of customs, echoing the same view added they also faced the problem of transfer. "It becomes difficult for us to continue with a case if the customs official concerned is transferred and another person with little knowledge about the goods in question takes over the charge."

He said most writ petitions stem from the imports of sugar, cars, PVC floor covering, BP sheets and steel sheets.

The customs house collects Tk 25 crore to 30 crore a day on average, he said, adding the house realised the record revenue of Tk 9,645 crore in the last 2003-2004 fiscal, registering a rise of 8.52 percent from the fiscal 2002-2003.

al-Qaeda warns US of defeat

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sights on taking hostage any foreigners perceived as collaborating with the US-led forces.

"In Iraq, the Mujahadeen foiled the American plan after the interim government showed such weakness," said the 53-year-old Zawahiri, considered by Washington to be al-Qaeda's ideologue and main strategist.

He claimed that the terror network's Mujahadeen were in control of "the entire east and south of Afghanistan" with the support of the people.

"The Americans are dug into their trenches and refuse to come out to face the Mujahadeen, despite our provocations by bombing and besieging them."

Zawahiri, wearing a white turban with a machine gun at his side, spoke to camera for several minutes in the tape, broadcast two days before the third anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on US cities that Washington blames on al-Qaeda.

Indonesian police have blamed Islamic militants linked to al-Qaeda for a bomb attack on the Australian

embassy in Jakarta on Thursday that killed at least nine people and wounded 182. A web site carried a statement purporting to be from the group, Jemaah Islamiah, claiming responsibility for the attack.

Al Jazeera, an influential Arabic broadcaster, did not say how it obtained the tape.

But it said Zawahiri had referred to the Darfur conflict in Sudan, suggesting the video was made in recent months. The al-Qaeda leader cited the crisis as an example of US desires to split the Arab and Muslim world, Al Jazeera said.

Zawahiri looked little different from how he has in previous videotapes.

In March, Al Jazeera aired a recorded message, which the CIA said was likely authentic, calling on Pakistanis to overthrow their US-allied government.

Pakistan, with US military back-up, has been trying to capture bin Laden, Zawahiri and other al-Qaeda supporters thought to be hiding in the mountainous region between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which also has a US-backed government.

Defeated in polls,

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new chamber EC, also threatened to close and lock up the office if anybody tried to disobey him.

Muhammad Ali lodged a general diary with Kotwali Police Station.

In the election, Anisur Rahman Khan Kamal, Sheikh Nur Muhammad, Ataharul Islam Chowdhury Babul, Abdur Razzak and Sheikh Abdus Sobhan were declared elected without contest as members of the BCCIEC.

In a meeting on September 5, the new members re-elected Ebauidul Huq Chan, former general secretary of district BNP, president and elected Anisur Rahman Khan Kamal and Sheikh Abdur Razzak VPs of the executive body.

Mir Maniruzzaman, election official of the BCCI EC, said the snatching will in no way affect the EC formation, as the election results had already been finalised and declared.

The chamber members and local business community condemned the act as an abuse of power by the ruling party leader.

Abdur Rahim, who is also general secretary of Kotwali thana BNP, however denied the snatching.

He also rejected the election results and termed the newly formed BCCI EC illegal, announcing he would take the matter to court.

WB Country

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delegates. "We don't consider such threats serious. Still, we are taking all-out measures."

Quoting the foreign ministry, BBC said the ministry officials were not aware of the threatening letter.

The government has taken adequate security measures to protect diplomats and other foreign nationals living in Bangladesh, BBC quoted the ministry as saying.

Reuters quoted a senior government official as saying yesterday Wallich informed Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman of the threat.

"The minister assured her of all sorts of security on the road and at home but yet she left," said the official, requesting anonymity.

Bomb scares and death threats have become commonplace since the August 21 grenade attack. Hallmarks of the incident suggest the attack was intended to kill AL President Sheikh Hasina, who finished her address to the rally moments before the attack.

Wallich met Hasina just days after the attack to convey her sympathies and said such violent incidents would affect the economy and investment in Bangladesh, Reuters said.

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Chowdhury was among 50 people wounded in a blast in the northeastern town of Sylhet in May.

Interpol team inspects

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Sudha Sadan, the opposition leader's Dhanmondi residence, to inspect her bullet-proof sports utility vehicle. Retired Major General AMSA Amin Chowdhury, advisor to AL, accompanied the team during the visit.

Earlier, Gibson Wilson, a forensic expert of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), examined the vehicle and sent some evidence to FBI laboratory in the USA, the report on which is yet to reach here.

No journalist was allowed to enter Sudha Sadan during the Interpol experts' stay there. The experts also did not make any comment.

Chowdhury later told the newsmen they co-operated with the Interpol team, because the vehicle is an evidence of the attack as well as to be courteous with the foreigners. But, he reiterated that the main opposition AL does not have any trust or confidence in any of the government-initiated investigations.

Earlier, in the morning, the Interpol team made another visit to the Bangabandhu Avenue spot of the grenade attack that killed 19 people and maimed and injured more than 200 others.

US ploy

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Mushrefa Mishu, president of Biplobi Oikya Front, alleged all initiatives in poverty reduction, agriculture and industry suggested by the WB since 1971 went against public interest.

There should be trial of the WB, which must compensate Bangladesh for the loss the country has so far suffered following its suggestions, Mushrefa added.

Abdus Salam, convener of Gonotantrik Majdur Party, and Nazrul Islam, coordinator, Jaliya Gono front, among others, addressed the rally.

The alliance brought out a procession after the rally.

Abduction fear stalks

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while raping. As I screamed, his aunt, who owns the house, rushed to the room and rescued me," Raima said.

"I spent two horrifying days locked in a room there. On the evening of December 11, Shafique and his accomplices unlocked the room and forced me to sign on a yellow-stamped paper. After a while, Shafique told me with a smile I was married to him," Raima recalled.

"As she refused to accept Shafique as her husband, Raima was sent home on an inter-district passenger coach the same evening. On reaching home, she disclosed her ordeal to her family.

The pretty and intelligent girl narrated her plight to this correspondent during his visit to her house in Sundram village of Varla union in Burichang upazila in Comilla on Saturday.

Raima's family fears attacks on them if they seek legal action against the alleged culprit, who hails from the same village.

The girl's helpless father in his quest for justice arranged traditional village-level 'shalish' (arbitration), but Shafique ignored that.

"We arranged shalish twice but Shafique did not turn up there. We tried to persuade Shafique to confess to his guilt and accept any decisions taken at the shalish. But he defied this and threatened to evict the family from the village if they made further attempts to brand him as a criminal," said Belayet Hossain, one of the arbitrators.

An investigation by this correspondent revealed that justice was denied in this case as the local union parishad chairman and members and some other influential people are loyal to Shafique's family, which have money and muscle power.

It appeared that no-one from the locality protested the mischief out of fear. Shafique's younger brother Badal, a trader, has threatened to

prevent loan facilities for farming from local NGOs if anyone makes allegations against his brother.

"I thought of seeking legal help but I don't have money to pay for it and I am also under threats. In such a situation, how can I get justice?" Alfad asked

On Saturday, this correspondent along with local police went to Shafique's house but his younger brother's wife Shampa said he (Shafique) no longer stays in that house.

"We know Shafique committed a serious crime (marrying a minor) and he has been on the run since December last year. My brother-in-law has no permanent address now. We don't know where he lives now but he often visits this house to meet us," Shampa said.

Shampa, Shafique's younger sister Farida Akter and his children were found at the brick house, not far from the family's thatched house.

Locals said sensing arrival of police and a journalist, Shafique fled the village.

"Shafique was here this evening," said a relative who offered shelter to Shafique and his wife in an abandoned tin-shed house next to his. "But since you people arrived here, I have not seen Shafique," he added.

Raima's father also said Shafique demanded of him to hand over his daughter (claiming her to be his wife) to him. "Belayet and Badal are putting pressure on the village headman to give in to his (Shafique's) demands," he said.

After the return of this correspondent from the village, Shafique and Badal along with Belayet stormed the house, vandalised belongings and forced Raima's father to leave the village with his family, a report received in Dhaka said.

Fida plans mega movie

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Guru Prasad Srivastava, who has roaring business of iron ore exports to China, has already paid only to buy 25 existing paintings by the 89-year-old painter. He has also entered into a memorandum of understanding with Hussain to buy 75 paintings that the artist will paint.

Fifty-two-year-old Srivastava, hailing from the Taj Mahal city of Agra and now based in Bombay, has decided to make paintings as his new area of investment. He told reporters Thursday that he would sell Hussain's paintings with value addition by compiling them in a book and including literature. "I will also hold audio-visual programmes of the paintings," he added.

Srivastava said the deal with Hussain took place at a chance meeting at the Bombay Turf Club following the painter's return from an exhibition in Dubai where he had put up 25 paintings. The Citibank group had offered to buy the paintings for Rs 25 crore but Srivastava persuaded Hussain not to sell them to the bank and offered to pay Rs 100 crore for a series of paintings.

"The Citibank have under-valued Hussain's paintings. They are a

treasure of India and should stay here only," said Srivastava when asked why he is forking out so much money for the paintings.

Srivastava owns Rs 500-crore Swarup Industries mainly involved in heavy engineering, software and infrastructure business besides iron ore exports to China.

Hussain, when asked what he would do with so much money at this age, said he planned to make a film on a scale and with top Bollywood stars emulating Sanjay Leela Bhanasali's Hindi mega-venture "Devdas" starring Aishwarya Rai, Madhuri Dixit, Shahrukh Khan and Jackie Shroff.

Hussain had directed his last feature film "Meenaxi: A Tale of Three Cities" starring Tabu and was commercially released one and half years back. This as well as his debut film "Gajagamiini" starring the painter's muse Madhuri Dixit had bombed at the box office. But then the Hussain has never made films for the box office.

This is undoubtedly the biggest deal in Hussain's life. The painter is rather candid in saying that he had never insured his hands that paint let alone his paintings.

Delhi summons envoy

FROM PAGE 1
Veena Sikri.

"India has always looked upon Bangladesh as a close friend and valued partner. At recent high-level interactions conducted in a friendly and cordial atmosphere, the two sides reiterated their desire to take the bilateral relationship forward," the statement says.

"India, for its part, remains committed to the process," it adds.

Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury declined to make any comment about the Indian reaction, but said he heard about it.

"Our high commission in Delhi is due to send a full report about it and we are waiting for the report," he added.

Morshed at the 'Bangladesh-India Dialogue for Young Journalists' in Dhaka on September 7 rubbished the charges of Indian insurgents' training camps in Bangladesh and alleging Bangladeshi criminals were operating from India.

On the Indian allegation that 195 camps of Indian insurgents exist in Bangladesh, Morshed said: "The list of insurgent camps from their side increases at every meeting between us. But they have not been able to provide a single telephone number or address of these camps."

"On the other hand we have given phone numbers, fax numbers and office addresses of Bangladeshi insurgent groups like Bangabumhi Andolon, who are in India, and criminals who are hosted by some groups there, but they have not done anything about it."

He dismissed the Indian claims of terrorist presence in Bangladesh, saying, "No country other than a banana republic would shut its eyes if there were terrorists in its territory."

He also accused India of offering discussions on border issues only after creating the issues in the first place.