

## GRENADE ATTACK 'Email sender', three others remanded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday remanded four persons in custody for five days each in a grenade attack case.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rouf Khan granted the remand prayer when Hannan, Abdur Rahman, Badsha Miah and Saibal Saha Partha were produced before the court at about 2:30pm yesterday.

The four persons picked earlier on different charges from different places in the city were shown arrested on Wednesday in the case filed by police on August 22, a day after the grenade attacks on an Awami League (AL) rally.

In the petition filed by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Wednesday, investigation officer claimed he collected important information about their involvement in the grenade attack, which killed 20 people and injured over 200 with AL President Sheikh Hasina surviving barely. But more interrogation is required to find out the motive behind the attack and whereabouts of their accomplices, he stated.

Advocate Gyanendra Chandra Biswas, the defence lawyer for Partha, submitted a petition seeking bail and cancellation of the remand prayer.

Moving the petition, the lawyer said Partha, who was arrested initially on August 26 allegedly for sending email to the daily Prothom Alo with a threat to kill Hasina within seven days, was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy.

Partha was remanded for seven days twice, but police failed to come up with any concrete evidence of his involvement.

He was physically and mentally tortured when police quizzed him in previous remands, the defence lawyer argued. But the general recording officer opposed the move and prayed for a seven-day remand. Upon hearing, the court rejected the bail petition and placed all the four on a five-day remand.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Abdur Rahman from his house at Sector 10 in the Suburban Uttara on September 4 and recovered a foreign revolver with 13 bullets. He was also taken on a 10-day remand for interrogation.

The other two-- Hannan and Badsha -- were arrested on September 8 from Mogbazar on charges of bomb explosion during an AL-enforced hartal. They were sent to Dhaka Central Jail the next day, as investigation officers did not seek for remand.

## 1,308 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested some 1,308 people on various charges during their countrywide drive in the last 24 hours ending at 6.00am yesterday.

During the period, the law enforcers recovered three firearms, three other weapons and one bullet and filed three cases against three people under the Arms Act.

## 34pc crop in 81 upazilas under water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing deluge has inundated 34 percent of the standing crop including aman and vegetables of 81 upazilas in 19 districts, sources at Agriculture Extension Department (DAE) said.

They however are not sure of the extent of damage to transplanted aman as it may revive if the water recedes in a day or two.

"Transplanted aman can sustain 72 hours totally submerged. Even with a few leaves left above the water, it continues to live and grow. So, we can't calculate right away how much of the aman crop will be

spoiled," said a DAE official.

But, agriculturists apprehend all the submerged vegetables will be ruined leading possibly to a price hike.

The DAE is yet to assess the total damage from this latest flooding as the torrential rain is still on.

Until Wednesday, crops in 395,056 hectares out of total 1,176,606 hectares were inundated in the districts, DAE sources said. Of that aman fields account for 370,375 hectares and vegetables 7,982 hectares.

According to DAE sources, most of the crop fields in Dhaka, Chittagong, Laxmipur, Cox's Bazar,

Rajbari, Madaripur, Faridpur, Gazipur, Feni, Noakhali, Jamalpur and Brahmanbaria are under water.

According to government assessment, the month-long devastating flash floods earlier this year ruined crops worth over Tk 2,000 crore affecting nearly 46 lakh farmers. Of them 26 lakh farmers have received transplanted aman saplings and vegetable seeds under a government relief programme.

The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank will provide further support to the flood-hit farmers. A 40-member joint team of the banks is currently conducting a need assessment towards that end.

## Dhaka for regional strategy to improve child nutrition

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Bangladesh yesterday called for a regional strategy to support maternal and child nutrition activities in Asia by sharing experiences among the countries.

A coordinated regional strategy would help bolster governmental efforts to improve child nutrition and maternal health care, said Minister for Women & Children Affairs Khurshid Jahan Haque.

Addressing the Regional Ministerial Consultation on Maternal and Child Health in Asian countries, she outlined the process of incorporating the nutrition perspective into the country's efforts to reduce poverty.

The minister was unanimously elected the chairperson of the consultations on the first day of the three-day conference on Wednesday.

Pointing to the success of food-based nutrition integration programmes in Bangladesh, Khurshid Jahan said infant mortality rate has come down from 75 per

thousand live births to 60 per thousand.

Besides, 30 percent babies are born with a low weight, down from 35 percent, she said.

Listing the various measures taken by the government to improve child nutrition and maternal care, the minister said Bangladesh was "increasingly getting global recognition for its landmark achievements in executing successfully programmes in health care, school education and population control."

Inaugurating the conference on Wednesday, Indian Health Minister Ambumanni Ramadoss suggested a regional collaborative network to support maternal and child nutrition activities.

Such network would help funding institutions and the private sector to reach out to those parts of Asia which have so far remained beyond the food security net, he said.

Ramadoss said underweight status and micro-nutritional deficiencies are one of the major causes of death and foetal malnutrition.

## Agri sector review by yearend

### Minister tells British envoy

UNB, Dhaka

An agriculture sector review, focusing on the past, present and future, is underway with assistance from World Bank and FAO and it would be finalised by the yearend.

Agriculture Minister MK Anwar said this when British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury met him at his office here yesterday.

Anwar Choudhury said UK, which has been one of the major development partners of Bangladesh over the years, wants to be involved further in the development spree of Bangladesh and is willing to assist it in boosting productivity and competitiveness in agriculture sector.

MK Anwar told the British envoy that most of concerns in

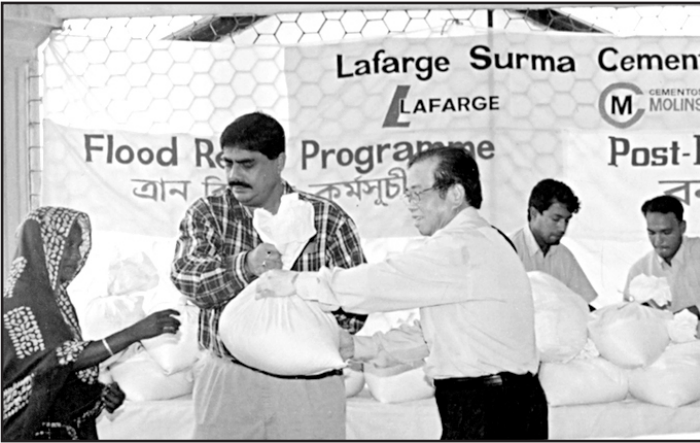
agriculture, including training facilities at the grassroots level, establishing research outfits, manpower, availability of good seeds, reduction of production cost and marketing, would be included in the review.

Anwar Choudhury lauded the efforts and shown interest in the final report saying, "We are observing the progress of the preparation of the review."

MK Anwar told the British envoy that the recent flood and heavy downpour in the last 3-4 days would not affect Aman farming as the water was receding.

Anwar Choudhury appreciated the Bangladesh government's efforts in tackling the flood efficiently.

DFID Representative Martin Leach was present on the occasion.



Yong Ngai Chan, managing director of Lafarge Surma Cement Limited, hands over relief items to a flood victim at Chhatak in Sunamganj recently.

## Historic Education Day today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Historic Education Day will be observed today.

On this day in 1962, the student community staged demonstration in the city demanding cancellation of the National Education Commission Report (Sharif Shiksha Commission Report) prepared by the then Pakistani military government. Police opened fire on the demonstrators killing several students including Mostafa, Wajullah and Babul and injuring others.

After the police fire, the student movement spread all over the country which later sparked-off the six-point movement in 1966 and mass uprising in 1969.

To observe the day, different student bodies and socio-cultural organisations have chalked out various programmes.

'Six combined student organisations against fundamentalism' will place wreath at the memorial plaque in front of Shiksha Bhaban.

The organisations are Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-backed BCL, Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree, Jatiya Chhatra Dhara, Jatiya Chhatra Oikya and Bangladesh Chhatra Samity.

Progatishil Chhatra Jote, a combine of left-leaning student organisations, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front will also bring out separate processions and place wreaths.

## Dr Fasih Uddin gets Ahsanullah Gold Medal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Fasih Uddin Mahtab, an eminent scholar and researcher, has been awarded Khanbahadur Ahsanullah Gold Medal-2003 for his outstanding contribution to educational and social sectors.

The gold medal was formally handed over to him at a function organised by Dhaka Ahsania Mission at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

Dr Fasih Uddin served as deputy advisor to the President, planning minister, agriculture minister, and finance minister from 1977 to 1982.

He was the secretary general of Bangladesh Diabetic Association from 1993 to 1997.

He had a number of research-based publications in local and foreign journals.

The award giving function was attended by former chief justice Justice Mostafa Kamal as chief guest and Vice-chancellor of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology Prof Dr M H Khan as special guest.

Others who received the award earlier included Ferdous Khan, Mohammad Ibrahim, S MAI-Hossaini, Syed Ali Ahsan, Principal Dewan Mohammad Azraf, Azizul Haq, Dr MR Khan, former chief justice Justice Mostafa Kamal, Mohammad Shams-Ul-Haq, Prof Dr Wahid Uddin Ahmed and Dr Sirajul Haq.

## BSF, criminals kill 293 Bangladeshis in 4 yrs

### Odhikar report says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and other miscreants killed 293 Bangladeshi citizens and injured 404 others after trespassing into Bangladesh territory over a period of last four years.

Most of the dead were innocent farmers who were either shot or abducted while engaged at farming in the field, said Odhikar, a coalition of human rights watchdog, in a report yesterday.

Besides, 1569 more Bangladeshis were the victims of atrocities perpetrated by the BSF and a gang of miscreants known as Ghosh Bahini during the same period from September 2000 to

August 31 last, said the report based on news published and broadcast in different mass media.

Around 451 Bangladeshis were arrested, 381 abducted and three raped during the period apart from 32 incidents of hijacking and looting which have created a situation of serious human distress in the north and south-west frontiers of the country, said the report.

There were innumerable flag meetings between the BSF and the BDR from Border out Post (BOP) Company Commander to Director General level in this connection, but no remedy has been found, the report added.

## Shibir cadres go berserk at RU hall

### Family members of provost assaulted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Islami Chhatra Shibir cadres and the students of Sher-e-Bangla Hall of Rajshahi University assaulted the family members of the hall provost and ransacked his house and office rooms at the hall on Wednesday night, prompting him to submit his resignation.

The students led by the cadres went berserk during a protest against increasing thefts at their rooms. Provost Prof Shahidur Rahman submitted his resignation letter to Vice-Chancellor Prof Faisul Islam Faruki yesterday morning.

Students of the hall, dominated by the Shibir, said they have been complaining about thefts for the last several weeks but the provost did not take any action so far.

Thefts have been taken place in at least 12 rooms this month, said Ismail Hossain, a student. Agitating students went on the rampage after unknown people stole Tk 900, clothes, a CD player, calculator and valuable books from the room No. 41 on Wednesday night, they said.

They stormed the hall office

breaking open its main gate and damaged the furniture. They also broke into the rooms of house tutors and broke lights and windowpanes.

Later, they rushed into the provost's house and assaulted some of his family members.

Hall Shibir President Sajib and his men, including Asad and Tapu, led the attacks and incited the protesters to attack the provost's house, students said.

Prof Shahidur Rahman told reporters that the students assaulted his wife and ransacked his house during the attack.

He also said that he increased the number of hall guards several times, installed enough lights and put up grills around the hall to prevent thefts.

A source close to him said the incidents of stealing might have a link with a conspiracy by a vested quarter against the provost.

On Monday, Shibir cadres beat up Rakib Haider Sabuj, a hockey player of the university, charging him with theft at room No. 43 without any evidence.

Additional police have been deployed in front of the provost's house.



Communist Party of Bangladesh stages a demonstration in the city yesterday protesting the government move to give immunity to World Bank.