



CRACKDOWN ON OPPPOSITION ACTIVISTS

Police, BDR arrest over 1,000 in capital alone

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five months into the wholesale arrests ahead of opposition Awami League's April 30 deadline to topple the coalition government, the police and paramilitary forces on Tuesday launched another countrywide mass-arrest drive in the run-up to the political programmes of the mainstream opposition parties.

The government this time has ordered a crackdown on the grass-

roots-level organisers of mainstream opposition parties to foil the planned series of anti-government programmes, the October 3 grand rally in particular.

The next course of oust-government movement is likely to be announced from the rally, according to sources close to the opposition parties.

Police sources said the crackdown began well ahead of the opposition parties' 50-kilometre human chain programme from Gazipur to

(BDR) arrested more than 1,000 people, 52 of them in block raids.

Police record however puts the number of arrests at only 421. Of the arrestees, over 500 were caught in overnight raids on Friday alone in the capital. Police authorities claimed the drive is part of their regular anticrime crackdown in the capital.

Police sources said the crackdown began well ahead of the opposition parties' 50-kilometre human chain programme from Gazipur to

Narayanganj. But the police intensified the drive as the human chain programme was a success with the spontaneous participation of thousands of opposition leaders, workers and supporters.

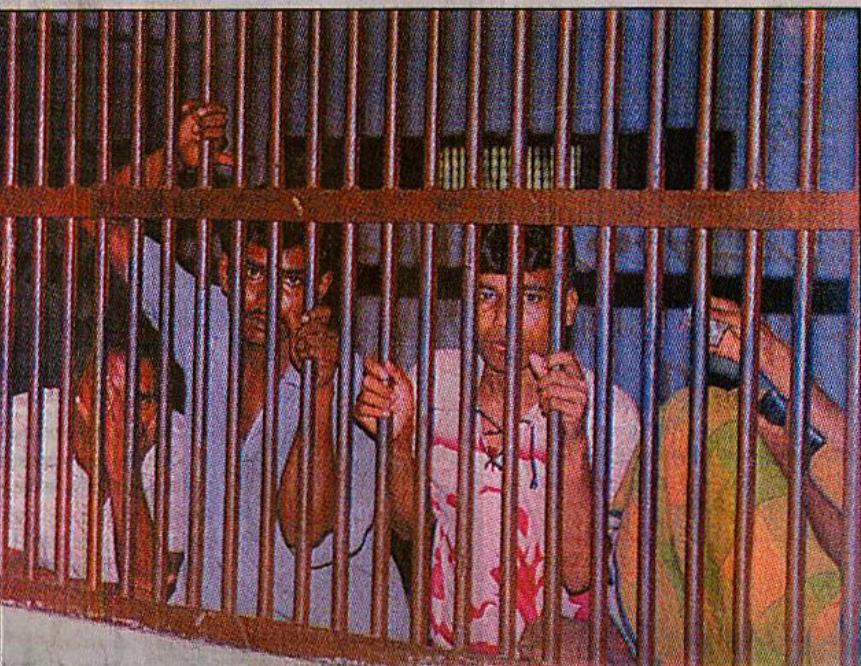
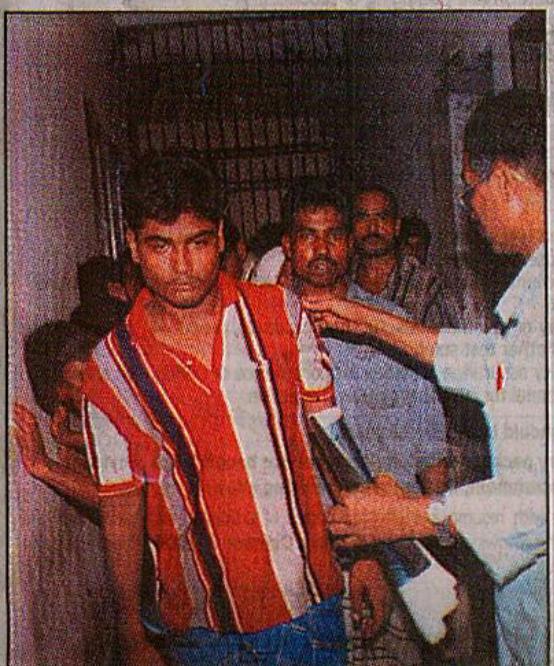
No central, city, thana or ward unit frontline leaders, however, would be arrested in line with an instruction of the government high-ups, the sources added. Rather, efficient organisers at the grassroots

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PHOTO: STAR

Residents demonstrate, right, after a passenger bus, left, crashed into roadside shops and shanties at Pallabi, killing seven people and injuring at least 10 others yesterday.



Arrestees look from behind bars, right, as a policeman frisks other opposition workers before putting them into custody at Ramna Police Station yesterday.

Top Jessore terror killed in 'crossfire' with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Mahmud Hasan Monju, a top terror of Jessore, was killed in 'crossfire' with police at Birampur village under Sadar upazila in the early hours yesterday.

Detective police arrested Monju, also a ringleader of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddha), at his father-in-law's house at Jalkar village on Thursday and took him to Kotwali Police Station for interrogation.

On his statement, detectives took Monju to Birampur village at about 2:00pm to recover arms and ammunition from an abandoned house belonging to Awami League leader Bimal Ray Chowdhury. They

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and Sharna, 3, and Sony, 10, Sharna, 5, Jamal, 20, Jamila, 35, Rabeya, 45, Shahana, 25, and an unknown man of 55.

Witnesses said the bus helper lost control of the empty Bikalpa Auto Service bus (Dhaka Metro-Ja 11-2935) while driving on Ceramic Main Road in Tekbari slum area under Pallabi Police Station at around 11:30am.

The dead include two six-year-old children -- Bablu and Sheuli -- Shahin, 25, and Selim, 28.

Locals alleged unknown people

stole the bodies of Sheuli and the rest of the dead -- three unidentified people including a woman -- besides taking away the killer helper from their hold.

The injured are Bablu's mother

Fatema, 27, and sisters Sumaiya, 5,

flattening it to the ground and killing Selim, a rickshawpuller and tenant of a nearby shanty. It also ran over Shahin, Selim's brother-in-law and also a rickshawpuller, and Sheuli and Rabeya, who had gone there to buy betel leaves, a few yards away.

The bus then veered into a grocery stall injuring Jamila, Zaman and Sharna standing in front and scattered the goods on the road.

Bablu and an unknown woman, who were also standing in front of the stall, got tangled with the bumper of the bus, which then swerved into Fatema's shack while she was cooking.

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Bus kills 7 as helper at wheel loses control

4 bodies allegedly taken away by unknown people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A helper yesterday crashed a passenger bus into roadside shops and shanties at Pallabi killing seven people and injuring at least 10 others, mostly women and children.

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Dhaka an active partner in war on terrorism

Morshed urges UN to play central role in Iraq democracy

UNB, Dhaka



Supporting the concept of disarmament and development, he said nuclear weapons make a direct and legitimate concern for Bangladesh for its geographical location in South Asia.

He said Bangladesh supports all measures, partial or otherwise, towards arms control, conventional and nuclear disarmament.

On recurrent floods that impede development in Bangladesh, the foreign minister sought measures to deal with this problem in a sustained manner through proper management of water resources in South Asia.

"In the final analysis, it is the long term rehabilitation and reconstruction measures that also require international support," he told the world assembly.

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Manmohan, Musharraf begin talks

AFP, New York

The leaders of India and Pakistan met in New York yesterday for talks aimed at jump-starting the peace process between the two neighbours.

Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf and India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York, where both have been attending the UN General Assembly.

They were to hold one-one-one talks before being joined by the foreign ministers of both countries, officials said.

It is their first meeting since Singh took office after a surprise election victory in May.

There are few expectations of a breakthrough, but some hope that it will build some momentum in talks between the South Asian neighbors, especially on the issue of the disputed region of Kashmir.

But there are hopes that it will help spur on a process that has made little progress since Musharraf met with Singh's predecessor Atal Bihari Vajpayee in January.

"I am very hopeful and optimistic of results," Musharraf told reporters on the sidelines of the UN

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Trader shot dead at Bhasantek

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Miscreants shot dead a trader at Bhasantek in Kafrul yesterday, a few days after police made him a witness to an arms case against an operative of the gang.

Witnesses said two of the gang, Redoy and Hanif, sprayed Abdul Karim Matbor, 35, owner of a grocery store, with bullets in front of the store at 5, West Bhasantek at around 9:00am.

Karim was the key-witness to a case filed under Arms Act against Galakata Hanif, a member of the gang, after police arrested him with firearm from the house of Karim's sister Banu Begum in the area a few days ago.

"Two youths came to the grocery and one, after lighting a cigarette called Karim out of his shop. As he came out, they started shooting at him," said Monir Hossain, a witness to the incident.

Relatives admitted him to Dhaka

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MODHUMOTI MODEL TOWN

Lawful breach of the law

PINAKI ROY

A realty company has for long been filling up a vast area in the flood-flow zone near Amin Bazar to develop a housing estate in defiance of the city's master plan and the city planners, with an unexpected backing of the country's higher courts.

The developer, Metromakers and Developers Limited, is filling 350 acres of swampy land in two mouzas, Bilmala and Balarupur, at the city outskirts to build a township christened Modhumoti Model Town.

Both the mouzas are in the Dhaka west flood-flow zone, where Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (1995-2015) specifically discouraged any real estate development.

"This is a flood plane and all development should be discouraged here to enable free flow of floodwater. There will be considerable negative effect on the surrounding areas if natural flow of floodwater is prevented," warned

urban planning experts in the plan.

Experts think this year's prolonged flooding in the capital was partly a payback for the massive land filling in the flood-flow zone and other low-lying areas.

Metromakers has not only obtained no permission of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk) for the earth filling but actually has been forbidden it several times by the city planning authorities.

"Metromakers is registered with the Rajuk as a real estate developer. But we neither approved its Modhumoti Model Town project nor permitted to fill land in the flood-flow zone," said Rajuk Member (Administration and Land) H M Zahurul Haq.

Under the project, the 350 acres of flood-flow land the realty company has been filling near Amin Bazar would be turned into a township comprising 2,526 residential plots of different sizes.

Metromakers Managing Director A F M Zahangir argued, "When we launched the project in 1990, Rajuk

did not have any such regulations and so we needed not the permission."

Zahangir said they started purchasing land for the housing project in 1990 and developing and selling out housing plots in 2000, adding the company sought Rajuk's permission for the model town in 2002.

On July 20, 2003 Rajuk secretary officially turned down the project proposal informing Metromakers that the city development authorities did not have any scope to consider the project as it was situated in the flood-flow zone.

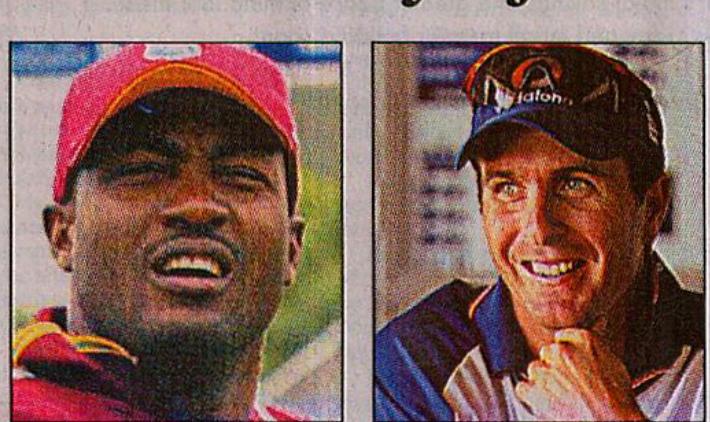
Metromakers then filed a writ petition with the High Court against Rajuk for not approving its housing project. After the hearing, the High Court stayed the earth filling but in July 2004 vacated that stay.

The High Court on September 1 vacated yet another stay of the project work that it had ordered earlier upon a petition of Bangladesh Environment Lawyer's Association (Bela) filed on August 14

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Unlikely foes in today's final

AFP, London



Brian Lara

Michael Vaughan



Boiyish prank brings bomb scare at Shahjalal Shrine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An apparent prank of a teenage boy panicked the Juma congregation at the mosque of Hazrat Shahjalal Shrine here yesterday.

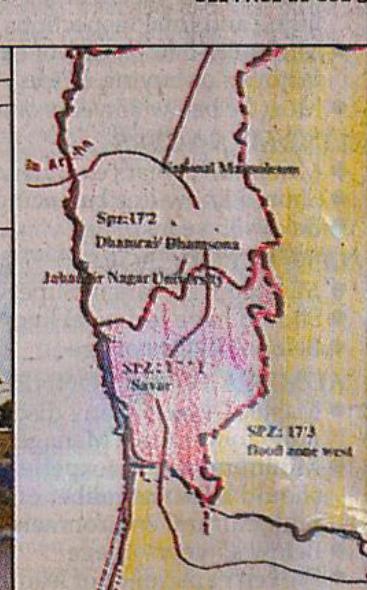
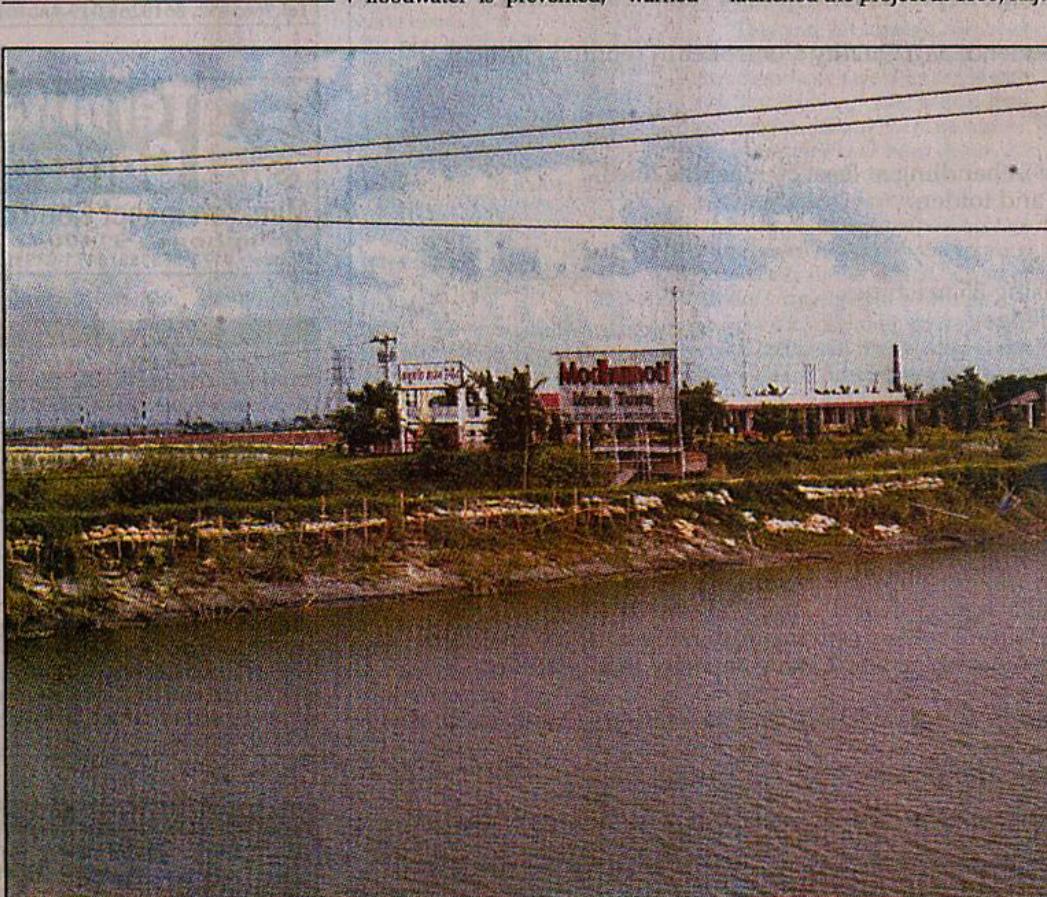
A bomb scare seized the worshippers as they saw a black metallic object suddenly fall on a Shamiyan (covering) overhead during the Khutba before the prayer, witnesses and police said.

The law enforcers on duty rushed to the spot and found the suspect object to be nothing but a typewriter roller wrapped in a carbon paper.

Police later arrested Habban, a 13-year-old student of the madrasa attached to the shrine, who admitted to having thrown the thing from the first floor of the madrasa building "just for fun".

Habban is the son of Mufti Mohammad Zakaria, a teacher of the same Dargah Madrasa.

He was taken to the local police station for interrogation and a case was filed.



A real estate developer is filling up 350 acres of swampy land in Dhaka west flood-flow zone on the outskirts of the capital to build 'Modhumoti Model Town' without permission of Rajuk. The map, inset, indicates the flood-flow zone.