

Thursday 30-9-2004

Police HQ  
denies it as  
mass arrest

UNB, Dhaka

The police headquarters yesterday categorically said the present scale of arrest could in no way be termed 'mass arrests' as the daily average of 1,216 persons caught this year is less than the figures of previous years.

A total of 328,017 arrests have been made in the country up to September 28 this year, showing a daily average of 1,216, said the police in a statement issued amidst criticism that "mass arrests" were being made in recent days to thwart anti-government opposition agitation.

Giving comparative statistics it said 419,039 people were arrested in 2000 with a daily average of 1,147 while 455,032 in 2001 with an average of 1,247 per day, 498,069 in 2002 with an average of 1,365 per day and 595,690 arrested in 2003 with a daily average of 1,632.

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## Mass arrest put on hold until Oct 3

Rights groups announce united stand against crackdown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued an injunction against the ongoing blanket arrests of opposition adherents and apolitical people alike under Section 86 of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Ordinance until October 3.

A HC Division bench comprising Justice Awald Ali and Justice AFM A Rahman delivered the order on a petition filed by a number of rights groups protesting the indiscriminate arrests under the section.

The bench will hear the case in full on October 3.

Meanwhile, leading rights groups of the country at a press conference yesterday declared a united stand against any threat to human rights (HR) in future, terming the ongoing mass arrests a gross violation of citizens' fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution.

They came down heavily on the government for launching the nationwide crackdown on the opposition, and asked the authorities concerned to stop it immediately and release the detainees with compensation.

They also lambasted the govern-

ment for ignoring an earlier court ruling in last April that asked it to explain in three weeks time why Section 86 of the DMP Ordinance should not be declared contradictory to the constitution.

The rights bodies are likely to serve a legal notice upon the government for launching the sections 69, 74, 85 and 100 of the DMP Ordinance, sources said.

The law enforcers started the blanket-arrest drive on September 21 apparently to quell the opposition upsurge fomenting over the August 21 assassination attempt on

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JAIL KILLING CASE  
Court orders  
arrest of  
witness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered arrest of an octogenarian witness in the historic Jail Killing Case whose inability to give a statement before court is delaying verdict on the high-profile political case.

Court sources said 84-year-old Saifuddin Ahmed could not appear before Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka on the day because of poor health in a replay of similar things before.

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Announcement  
The Daily Star will not come out on Friday because of newspaper holiday today on account of holy Shab-e-Barat. The Star Weekend Magazine will appear on the newsstands on Saturday, instead of Friday, because of the holiday.

## Bribes eat away 3pc sales of businesses

Says World Bank survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Almost all Bangladeshi companies are subject to pay bribes and the volume is almost 3 percent of their total sales, a World Bank (WB) survey reveals.

The firms surveyed have described corruption as number one constraint on business followed by unreliable power supply and insecure property rights.

The survey finds that majority of Bangladeshi companies are concerned over security of their property rights and 83 percent of the respondent firms lack confidence that courts will uphold their property

rights.

WB's World Development Report 2005, globally released yesterday, contains the findings of the Investment Climate Surveys that cover 3,900 registered firms in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Pakistan.

Additional 1,000 micro and informal firms in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan were also interviewed in the surveys covering over 30,000 firms in 53 developing countries for preparing the report, according to a press statement of the bank.

Making a comparison of investment climate, the WB survey says if

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Dhaka jailer,  
others face  
torture charge

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A criminal case was filed against the superintendent, jailer and two officials of Dhaka Central Jail with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka yesterday for torturing a prisoner.

Mohammad Abul Hossain of Tinshed Colony in Kafra accused Jail Superintendent Harun-

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Sudhangshu  
Shekhar Halder  
passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former lawmaker and Awami League (AL) leader Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder died at the Bir Dem Hospital in the city last night. He was 68.

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## Commentary

### Throttling democratic dissent will lead to hartals

Government pushing opposition to more desperate methods

MAHFUZ ANAM

We have never failed to condemn the opposition for calling hartals. We did so when the Awami League (AL) called it during '91-'96 and also when the BNP followed suit during

'96-'01 period. We wrote volumes against hartals terming it to be against democracy, against all forms of individual rights and against our economy.

This newspaper and this writer never spared an opportunity to try

create public opinion against hartals. But regrettably a new round of them seem to loom large because of some undemocratic, unconstitutional, extremely high-handed measures of the government

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of locals and civil society members yesterday formed a human chain protesting construction of a public toilet in front of the Martyred Intellectuals' Monument in Rayerbazar in Mohammadpur.

The protesters termed the construction in front of the monument an insult to the martyred intellectuals and their families. It also ruins the aesthetic qualities of the

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### Rayerbazar monument drifting into ruin

PINAKI ROY

Threatened by land erosion and subsidence, the Martyred Intellectuals' Monument at Rayerbazar is falling into ruin as the authorities are sitting on measures to protect it.

Already the brick-made floor of the splendid monument built only five years ago has developed some large cracks with the concrete surface subsiding every day.

If the monument is not repaired urgently, the huge structure may cave in anytime, locals fear as land erosion continued engulfing its premises.

"Now the floor gets waterlogged after every spell of rain," said Md Abdul Barek, one of the guards of

the monument, showing several cracks on the surface.

Public Works Department (PWD) sources said they have to rebuild the base to keep the monument intact and their engineers have already done a technical test of the ground.

"Our officials have already surveyed the ground and the floor where cracks are seen," said one of the officials of PWD, which looks after the memorial.

The cracks have developed probably because its construction took place in a very short time after earth filling, another official of PWD told The Daily Star.

"The authorities should have waited for a certain period before

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### Flood rehabilitation needs \$1.43-1.6b WB, ADB to provide chunk of funds

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

A draft aide memoire of the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have put the post-flood recovery needs at \$1.43 billion to \$1.6 billion against a damage estimate of \$2.2 billion.

Sources said a joint mission of the WB and the ADB submitted the aide memoire to the government after Sunday's wrap-up meeting. The banks will provide a chunk of the recovery assistance and the government will fund the rest of the needs, officials at the Economic

Relations Division (ERD) said.

The WB and ADB have given the government separate assistance plans in the aide memoire and will give a final assessment report by November 15.

As part of the three-phase recovery assistance programme worked out by a joint mission, the ADB will release the first phase of recovery (Immediate Recovery Assistance), based on the swift processing of a new Emergency Assistance Loan (EAL). This will be combined with restructuring of the existing loan

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Members of the civil society demonstrate against the construction of a public toilet in front of the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial at Rayerbazar yesterday.

### Shab-e-Barat tonight

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Shab-e-Barat, the night of fortune and forgiveness, will be observed across the country tonight with due solemnity and religious fervour.

Muslim devotees will spend the night offering prayers at mosques and homes seeking divine blessings for long life, peace, progress and happiness for themselves, the country and the Muslim ummah.

They will also visit the graveyards of their close relatives to offer fataha seeking peace of the departed souls.

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### YASMIN KILLING CASE Third convict walks gallows

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Amrita Lal, the third policeman convicted with death in the sensational Yasmin rape and murder case, was hanged in Rangpur Central Jail in the early hours today.

His body will be handed over to relatives in the morning.

Senior Jail Superintendent Azizul Haque read out the death warrant to Amrita at the condemned cell at 10:00pm. He also asked Amrita if he had any message for his family.

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