

Kerry 'leads' in TV debate

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war on terrorism with "mixed messages" about whether toppling Saddam Hussein was worth the cost.

"What message does that send to our troops? What message does that send to our allies? What message does that send the Iraqis?" the Republican incumbent asked. "The world is better off without Saddam Hussein."

Iraq and national security dominated as the two candidates battled over how to stabilize that war-torn country, where more than 1,000 US soldiers have died amid deadly chaos that shows no sign of ebbing.

Leading US dailies on Friday agreed that the debate was a tie. "If Americans who tuned into last night's presidential debate were waiting for one of the candidates to catch the other in a fatal error, or leave him stammering, the event was obviously a draw," wrote The New York Times.

Kerry threw the first punch in the political prizefight by confidently declaring "I can do a better job" on Iraq and on averting another terrorist attack like the September 11, 2001 strikes.

He also charged that Bush unnecessarily diverted resources from the hunt for Osama bin Laden to the war in Iraq, saying: "This president has made, I regret to say, a colossal error of judgment. And judgment is what we look for in the president."

"The world is better off without Saddam Hussein," said the president, who painted his rival as fickle on crucial national security issues, noting he voted to authorise the Iraq war in 2002 but against war funding in 2003.

"We're not going to achieve our objective if we send mixed signals to our troops, our friends, the Iraqi citizens," said Bush. "You cannot lead if you send mixed messages."

"I've had one position, one consistent position, that Saddam Hussein was a threat. There was a right way to disarm him and a wrong way. And the president chose the wrong way," countered the

Massachusetts senator.

Kerry has accused Bush of fracturing alliances and damaging US global standing in the rush to war; Bush has charged Kerry is more worried about worldwide popularity than protecting the United States.

Before the confrontation, the Republican and Democratic rivals shook hands and exchanged tense smiles before taking cover behind matching lecterns.

Kerry, a four-term senator, has trailed in polls that indicate that undecided voters may be open to a change of president, but have yet to said fueled his outlook.

Amid signs of slipping US public support for his policy towards Iraq, Bush sounded defensive, and frequently shot annoyed glances at Kerry, who in turn frequently looked down at his notes during the president's answers.

The two clashed on approaches to the North Korean nuclear crisis – Bush warning against Kerry's call for bilateral talks – and to Iran's moves to develop a nuclear program.

But both agreed that the most serious threat to US national security was the possibility that terrorists like Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network might get their hands on nuclear materials.

And Kerry and Bush called the violence sweeping through Sudan's troubled Darfur region "genocide" while saying they opposed sending US troops there.

Kerry and Bush will have a second debate, on October 8 in St. Louis, Missouri, and finish with a session on domestic policy October 13 in Tempe, Arizona.

The televised faceoff was scheduled after weeks of negotiations on the most minute aspects of the event, including the height of podiums, the temperature of the room and allowable camera angles.

Despite the controlled environment, the New York Times said, the discussion "seemed like a breath of fresh air" to a campaign starved for real substance.

584 more arrested

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The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, however, on Thursday modified the High Court order.

Police launched the mass arrest drive on September 21 in the run-up to the October 3 grand rally of the main opposition Awami League (AL) and its allies.

Almost all the arrestees are either the grass-roots level activists of AL and its front organisations or innocent commoners, sources said.

DMP Commissioner Ashraf Huda yesterday told The Daily Star that the ongoing drive is a routine one to arrest criminals, who stand accused in different cases and have arrest warrants issued against them.

He, however, said police would uphold the Higher Court's order in arresting people.

Meanwhile, police in last 24 hours till six in the morning yesterday arrested 1999 people including two Dhaka-based listed criminals across the country. Of the arrestees, 676 are accused in various cases while 1304 were held with warrants issued for their arrests, said a Press Information Department handout.

BSS adds: The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on Thursday modified the High Court order on 'mass arrest'.

A vacation bench of the High Court on September 29 asked the government not to arrest any person under section 86 of Dhaka

Metropolitan Police (DMP) Ordinance till October 3 after an application moved by Ain O Shalish Kendra and other human rights organisations.

The Appellate Division yesterday modified the High Court order directing the Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Inspector General of Police and the Commissioner of DMP not to arrest any person under the section 86 of the DMP Ordinance unless he or she is found with arms or any dangerous house-breaking tools between sunset and sunrise without any satisfactory excuse.

This order shall remain valid till disposal of the High Court's injunction.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice MA Aziz passed the order after hearing a government application for stay of the High Court order.

Additional Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali submitted that if the High Court order is not modified it would be tantamount to passing a blanket order.

Dr M Zahir stood for Ain O Shalish Kendra and others.

Deputy Attorney General Huda Uddin Mollah, Assistant Attorneys General Robiul Karim, Mohammad Abdul Baset and Razik Al Jalil represented the state.

Police-mob clash

leaves 17 hurt in N'ganj

UNB, Narayanganj

At least 17 people, including seven policemen, were injured in a clash following the killing of a van driver in a road accident at Langolbandh bus stand here on the night of holy Shab-e-Barat.

Local sources said a chaotic situation prevailed on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at 10:30pm when some constables of Kamal police outpost of Bandar Police Station allegedly started collecting tolls from the passing vehicles.

Jewel, a van driver carrying a body, was killed instantly and his helper, Timir, injured when a truck hit them during the chaos on the highway.

Angry locals blocked the highway for an hour and damaged several vehicles. They also attacked policemen when the law enforcers led by the officer in-charge (OC) of Bandar Police Station went to the spot.

The policemen charged batons, leaving 10 people injured. Seven policemen, including OC Abdus Salam, Sub-Inspectors Shahidur Rahman and Abul Kalam and in-charge of Kanchpur police outpost were injured in the mob attack.

Additional police from the district headquarters went to the spot and brought the situation under control at midnight.

In-charge of Kamal police outpost Abul Kalam, constables Mujibur Rahman, Delwar and Azizur Rahman have been suspended.

Deaths in hands

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5,748 from September 23 to 29, the report said.

Four newscasters were killed, 99 of them injured, four arrested, two abducted, 23 assaulted, 65 implicated in cases and 264 received threats across the country.

The report went on to say that 673 women and children were raped from January 1 to September 30, while 90 of them were killed. As many as 193 were also acid-burnt.

Odhikar further said 118 women were killed in 189 dowry-related incidents, while 1,249 children were oppressed. Of them, 292 were killed, 259 raped, 202 abducted, 29 arrested, 42 acid-burnt, 56 trafficked and 127 went missing.

In Chittagong Hill Tracts 35 people were killed, 177 injured and 105 abducted, the report added.

Suicide bomber

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forged close links with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network and have been used to launch attacks against Pakistani leaders in retaliation for Islamabad's support for the US-led war on terror since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

Commander of Rab, Chittagong unit, Lt Col Kazi Emdadul Huq told The Daily Star, "We were trying to arrest listed criminal Jan-e-Alam and his operatives since we

Donors seek

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tactics on this review, subordinate agencies are jeopardizing the sustainability of rural electrification effort," it observed.

"... I wish to share our grave concerns about recent developments in this sector which are damaging its current operations, future expansion as well as the possible extent of the cooperation of the donors. We do not exaggerate in saying that the power sector is nearing a crisis point," wrote Wallich, also the country director of the World Bank.

"Urgently-needed new generation plants are being delayed by a consistent pattern of questionable tendering and re-tendering by (the government). The ongoing Sirajganj retender is only the most recent example. Of the 5 plants under process of procurement by the government, only 4 power plants have been awarded. As a result, no generating capacity of significance has been brought on stream in this 2-year period.

"By the Power Ministry's own estimates, Bangladesh, an already very power scarce country, needs to bring 450 MW on stream each year, just to prevent current shortages from worsening. The economy, jobs and investment are being badly hurt by this apparent misgovernance in the public procurement process," said Wallich.

She also said she agrees with the government in saying the power supply must maintain the pace needed to meet the demands of a growing economy. But the adverse effect of power being unavailable during the floods shows that the vital relationship between reliable power supply, growth and poverty reduction in Bangladesh must be kept in mind.

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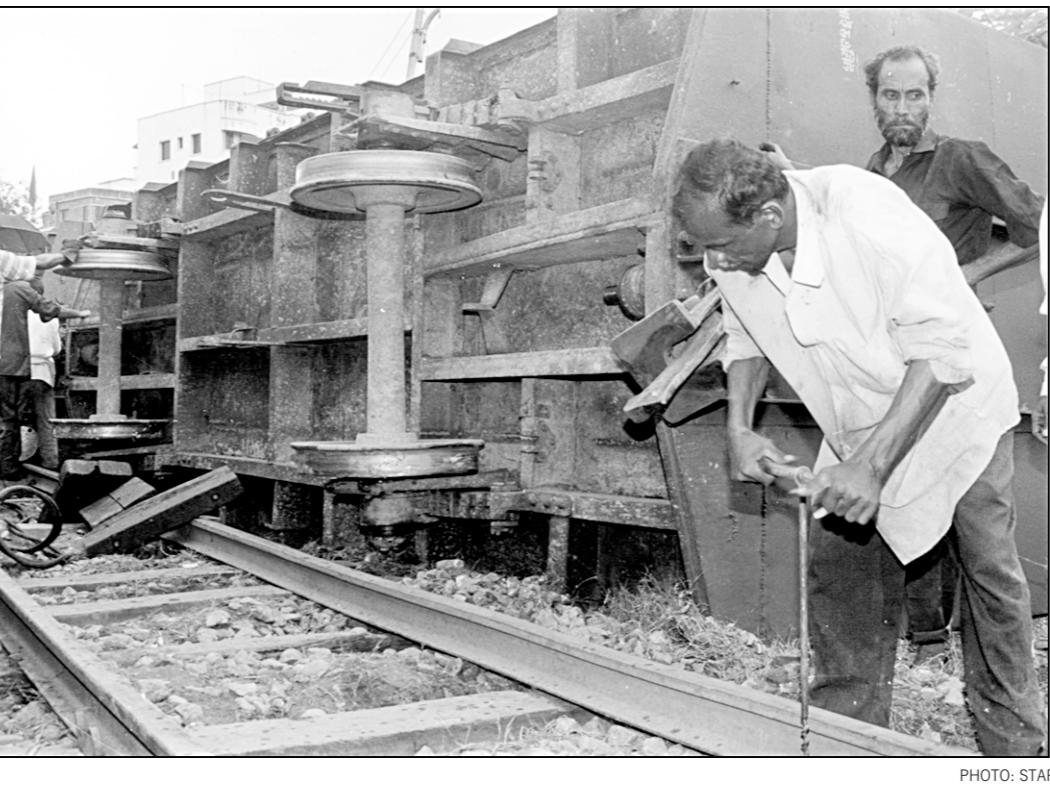


PHOTO: STAR

A railway worker repairs the tracks damaged in a derailment of a goods train at Gendaria on the Dhaka-Narayanganj route Thursday.

Top Raozan criminal

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that erupted at 5:00am and ran through 11:00am Thursday, Rab sources said. The two sides traded some 1,000 bullets during the shootout on Thursday".

"Jan-e-Alam and his gangsters died on the spot during the shootout with us," the Rab commander added.

Local sources said Jan-e-Alam and his goons engaged Anil Dutta, reportedly a rickshawpuller, as watchman while they were hiding into a house owned by a local molasses trader Arun Dey Wednesday midnight to evade arrest.

The latest killings raised to 13 the number of deaths in the custody of or in shootouts with Rab since it launched operations in Chittagong in April.

The anticrime force seized a 762-mm AK-56 rifle, two .303 rifles, two foreign double-barrel breech-loading (DBBL) guns, an SBBL gun, a sophisticated shotgun, 340 bullets, 50 cartridges, commando jackets and travel bags.

Jan-e-Alam was wanted in 37 criminal cases filed against him and his gang members on charges of murders, rape, abduction and extortion, Rab and police sources said.

The news of the death of Jan-e-Alam and his gangsters prompted hundreds of people to flock to the scene of the shootout, while processions were brought out to greet the Rab members, witnesses said.

Commander of Rab, Chittagong unit, Lt Col Kazi Emdadul Huq told The Daily Star, "We were trying to arrest listed criminal Jan-e-Alam and his associates started firing at Rab members at 4:30am.

Being aware of the presence of Rab at 5:00am, Jan-e-Alam and his associates started firing at random, prompting Rab men to

launched our operations here. But on receipt of secret information we launched the predawn raid on his hideout on Thursday".

"Jan-e-Alam and his gangsters died on the spot during the shootout with us," the Rab commander added.

Golam Akbar Khandakar, Chittagong North Unit president of the BNP, said, "We are very happy at the death of Jan-e-Alam and his gangsters. They did not belong to the BNP. They were loyal to leaders who joined the BNP in 1996."

A resident of Kalampati village, who was once victimised by Jan-e-Alam and his men, said, "It is now the talk of the whole Raozan and everyone is happy here at his death. Like me, many others suffered as he and his accomplices unleashed a reign of terror here."

13 KILLED IN CTG

Rab launched its operations in Chittagong in April this year and as many as 13 people have been killed either in its custody or shootouts with it here.

Thursday's killing of 10 people in Raozan saw the highest numbers of casualties in a Rab raid at a single encounter.

Earlier, a madrasa teacher of Chandpur, unit, was killed at Agrabad in the port city during Rab operations.

Top terrorist and local UP chairman Ahmedul Huq Chowdhury alias Ahmedya, who in August joined the BNP from Jamaat-e-Islami, was killed along with his accomplice Minhaz in Rab custody during a shootout.

Rab earlier had made several abortive attempts to catch the notorious criminal and his gang. From September 26 when he began to campaign for the polls, three undercover Rab teams started watching his activities. The teams eventually came to know about the whereabouts of Jan-e-Alam and his gang and Rab members cordoned off the house of Arun Dey at 4:30am.

Backed allegedly by a ruling BNP stalwart of Chittagong, Jan-e-Alam also ran for elections for the post of ward commissioner in Raozan municipal polls slated for October 6, Rab and police sources said. They added he used to run election campaigns from his hideout.

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Following leads from him, the same team went to Alampur Lane in Sutrapur to recover arms and nab his associates, said a police press release.

But as they reached Diganta Majlish Club at Alampur Lane, around 10 of Farid's associates opened fire on them. The joint force fired at least 33 rounds of bullets in return, said the press release.

At one stage of the shoot-out Farid while trying to escape received several bullets from his men, said the press release.

Inspector Mohammad Salsuddin and Sergeant Mizanur Rahman were admitted to Razarbagh Police Lines Hospital.

Sub-Inspector Matiur Rahman of Sutrapur Police Station took Farid to DMCH with at least eight bullets in stomach, chest, armpits, ear and shoulder. The doctors there declared him dead at around 2:00am, it said.

The hospital sources, however, contradicted the statement and said Farid was brought dead there.

The joint forces recovered two

revolvers, three bullets and six cartridges the criminals had abandoned on the scene.

Inspector Mojibur Rahman Majumder of Cobra has filed a case with Sutrapur Police Station for assaults on policemen.

Sutrapur police on Thursday sent the body to morgue where Metropolitan Magistrate Syed Mohammad Mujibul Hoque carried out inquest into the dead.

Farid's mother Samsun Nahar told newsmen that Farid was a factory worker in Thakaribazar area. "I heard he was arrested from the area, but could not imagine they would kill him," she said.

After watching the news on television, she rushed to the morgue and identified her son and received the body after autopsy.

Police said Farid was an underworld leader, when his operatives allegedly tried to snatch him free from them at Mohakhali, Dhaka, on September 2.

Rab men gunned down Molla Shamim, an underworld leader, when his operatives allegedly tried to snatch him free from them at Mohakhali, Dhaka, on September 2.

Rab men gunned down Billal Hossain, 28, near his Sher-e-Bangla

Road House in Rayerbazar, Dhaka, on September 9 after he allegedly shot at them in a bashed bid to escape.

On September 15 Rab-2 picked up BNP activist Mohammad Zinnah from a Dhaka hospital and a couple of hours later sent his body to the DMCH.

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