

# Blast spree goes on in Assam

4 more killed, 40 injured

AGENCIES, Guwahati

A fresh wave of bombs ripped through streets and marketplaces in India's northeastern state of Assam yesterday, killing four people and wounding 40 in escalating violence blamed on tribal separatists.

India's insurgency-racked northeast was reeling yesterday from one of its deadliest waves of violence in years, as police reported more killings overnight that brought the death toll to 53 with 141 injured.

A string of bloody blasts and shootouts in adjoining Assam and Nagaland states on Saturday killed at least 44 people. Overnight another five victims died in hospital while four others were killed in fresh violence, police said yesterday.

The attacks came as India Saturday commemorated the birth of the country's independence leader Mahatma Gandhi, a champion of non-violence.

Five people were wounded yesterday when rebels lobbed a grenade at shoppers in a teeming market in northern Assam's Sonitpur district, 180km from the main city Guwahati, a police spokesman said.

Late Saturday, one person was killed when gunmen fired on a train near Bagmari village in eastern

Assam's Karbi Anglong district.

In another incident, three National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) militants were killed when an explosive device they were planting exploded in northern Assam's Darrang district early Sunday, police said.

Two bombs strapped to bicycles exploded in markets in different parts of Assam, killing a man and wounding at least 20 people, mostly shoppers.

Two more went off in the streets of the remote towns of Sonari and Baska, near the state's border with Bhutan, wounding another 20 people.

Officials blamed most of the attacks on the outlawed National Democratic Front of Bodoland, which is marking its "Raising Day" since it began fighting for a separate homeland for Bodo tribals in 1985.

The tribals accuse the federal government of plundering the region's natural resources and flooding it with outsiders.

"The NDFB, which was lying low for quite some time, is now desperate," Assam Home Commissioner Biren Kumar Guhain said. "They have carried out these attacks to boost the morale of their cadres and to commemorate the Raising Day."

(Reuters, AFP)

## Mob kills 'mugger,' police informant slaughtered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Miscreants slaughtered a police informant in Rangpur area while a suspected mugger severely injured from mob beating died at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

In Mohammadpur, extortions shot the general manager (GM) and a staff of a printing press as the GM refused to give them toll.

Police recovered the body of Quamruzzaman, 16, an informant to Khilgaon Police Station, from Aftab Nagar Project at South Badda at around 8:30am yesterday with his throat slit and bruises on different parts of the body and sent it to the DMCH for autopsy.

Family members said Quamruzzaman was missing since Saturday evening after two youths, identifying themselves as his friends, called him out of their house at Palash Bagh in Badda.

The victim's father Shamsul Islam suspects a local gang might kill his son for helping police to arrest one of their members a few days back.

He filed a case with Badda Police Station naming six locals as suspected killers. Police could not arrest anybody until last evening.

Muktar 25, a suspected mugger, admitted to the DMCH with injuries he sustained in a mob beating, died in the early hours yesterday.

A mob caught and beat him on Saturday noon after he snatched a gold chain from a female pedestrian at Dania area in Demra, police said.

At Adabor in Mohammadpur, extortions stormed Abinash Printing Press and shot Islam Alam, 40, the GM and Farid Ahmed, 25, a staff at around 12:30pm.

"We were five people inside the GM's room when the miscreants entered and asked us not to move. As I tried to run away they shot me in the chest and moments later shot in Alam's right leg," said Farid who is undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

Alam is undergoing treatment at the Orthopaedic Hospital.

Asgori, a staff of the press said a local gang was pressing Alam for giving them tolls.

## Low over Bay

FROM PAGE 12

Cox's Bazar and 1,115km south-west of Mongla port at 12noon yesterday.

It is likely to intensify further and move in a northwesterly direction," said a special bulletin of the met office.

Maximum sustained wind within 44km of the depression centre is about 40kph rising up to 50kph in gust to squalls. The sea will remain moderate.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been asked to hoist the distant cautionary signal No. one and the fishing boats and trawlers over the north Bay and deep sea to stay close to the coast and proceed with caution.

## Sherpur journalist

FROM PAGE 12

They decided to keep blank space on the front page of newspapers for the next three days as a gesture of protest at the killing.

Dipankar started his career in journalism in mid 70s as a Sherpur correspondent of Daily Kartao. He worked as an assistant editor of the daily for a long time. Besides, he worked for Daily Bangladesh and Daily Chandni Bazar before joining Durjy Bangla.

He was the former president of Bogra Union of Journalists (BUJ) and Sherpur Press Club and convened a meeting of Sherpur Reporters' Unity.

BUJ in a statement condemned the killing of Dipankar. They decided to hoist black flags at all the union offices and put on black badges till October 7.

## UK under-secretary

FROM PAGE 1

The arrival of Jay, who is accompanied by Stephen Smith, head of the South Asia Department at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and his wife Lady Jay, follows a visit by British MP Oona King two weeks back.

At the end of her visit, King termed Bangladesh's democracy 'fragile' and expressed concern for what she said was a 'daily erosion of democracy in Bangladesh.'

This will be the highest level visit by a British official since the May 21 grenade attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury.

King expressed serious concern over the grenade attack probe, which has made little headway.

Britain is the fifth largest bilateral development partner of Bangladesh and the third largest destination for export.

## Saarc officials

FROM PAGE 1

may come with a long negative list in the meeting. But three developing economies India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka may be flexible and accommodative to minimise the differences with the least developed economies of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) at the fifth meeting of its kind.

Presently, Bangladesh has major trade deficit with India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka as well as with least developed economies like Nepal and Bhutan within Saarc.

The present water crisis of the area will soon be over with the installation of new water pump.

He said the new water pump that will produce 40/50 lakh litres of water a day, will hopefully start operating before Ramadan.

"We need to install more water pumps to resolve the crisis in Dakshinkhan. But financial and capacity limitations do not allow us to do so," said Managing Director of Dhaka Wasa ANH Akhter Hossain.

Besides, scarcity of land is another obstacle to installing more water pumps, he added.

Akhter Hossain, however, said the present water crisis of the area will soon be over with the installation of new water pump.

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# Modern ships

FROM PAGE 1  
Shibsa, two tugboats built at Khulna Shipyard.

At the function National Standard was given to the navy flotilla for its outstanding contribution to maritime defence of the country.

Earlier on her arrival at the jetty, Naval Chief Rear Admiral Shah Iqbal Muztaba received the PM and a smart contingent of marines presented guard of honour.

Addressing the function Khaleda said, "Effective steps have been taken to build Bangladesh Navy as a three-dimensional force through adding modern ships and gadgets, helicopters and submarines".

Elaborating on development in the navy under the present government, Khaleda said five offshore patrol ships had been purchased from the UK for round-the-clock vigilance to protect the marine resources within the huge maritime boundary as well as ensure safe movement of commercial ships. Of the five ships, the 'Kapotakha' and the 'Korotoa' were commissioned last May.

"We are always active for modernisation of Bangladesh Navy despite resource constraints. Adding seven ships at one go to the naval fleet reflects the present government's firm commitment to well organise the naval force," she told the function.

The prime minister said she believed that offshore patrol vessels, fast-attack crafts and gunboats would play a remarkable role in safeguarding the country's waters, sea-wealth, economic interests and, above all, national security.

She thanked the governments of the two countries for providing vessels and congratulated those officers and sailors who brought the ships sailing past a long way.

The PM also specially congratulated the engineers and all concerned of Khulna Shipyard on their constructing two new tugboats—the

Rupsha and the Shiba—inducted in the Bangladesh Navy. She also thanked the Netherlands government for extending support to the shipbuilding work.

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## Grenade attack suspect remanded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A court yesterday remanded Abdur Rahim, suspected of his involvement with the August 21 carnage on an Awami League (AL) rally, for three days more.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday produced Rahim before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka on completion of remand for five days, seeking further five-day remand.

The High Court Division Bench of Justice Md Abdul Wahab Miah and Justice Zinat Ara on August 15 also asked Metro Makers to stop running advertisements on plot sales under the project.

The investigation officer (IO) told the court that he gathered important information from Rahim during interrogation, adding, the suspect needs to be questioned further for the whereabouts of his accomplices.

After hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza granted the remand for three days.

The CID picked up Rahim, caretaker of a public toilet at Fubaria Railway Super Market on September 26.

Earlier on Saturday, Mohammad Walilullah alias Walin, arrested from Fubaria Railway Colony on Friday on the same charge was remanded for five days.

Rahim, Walin, Saibal Saha Partha, Abdur Rahman, Habib alias Hannan and Badsha Miah have so far been shown arrested in the August 21 grenade attack case.

## MODHUMOTI TOWN Court stops earth-filling for 4 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday stayed for four weeks operations of the September 1 High Court vacation of an August 15 injunction on earth-filling of sub-flood flow zone at Amin Bazar in Savar under Modhumoti Model Town Project.

In so doing, the Vacation Bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice Md Tafazzul Islam reinstated the August 15 High Court orders that slapped a six-month injunction against Metro Makers Limited.

The reinstatement follows an appeal petition filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) against the September 1 orders.

The High Court Division Bench of Justice Md Abdul Wahab Miah and Justice Zinat Ara on August 15 also asked Metro Makers to stop running advertisements on plot sales under the project.

The Supreme Court yesterday in a rule asked the government agencies to explain why they should not be directed to protect the sub-flood flow zone being filled up by Metro Makers.

It also asked the government why Modhumoti Model Town Project, Mirzabuddin Ahmed, assisted by advocates Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Tanjibul Alam, Iqbal Kabir and Abu Kalam Azad, moved for BELA.

The High Court Division Bench of Justice Joyful Abedin on September 1 vacated the August 15 injunction order.

Senior Advocate Khondker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, assisted by advocates Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Tanjibul Alam, Iqbal Kabir and Abu Kalam Azad, moved for BELA.

In a pin-drop silence, she began her speech paying homage to the victims of August 21 grenade attacks and said, "Tens of thousands of people are here, but some are not whom we lost forever in the deadly attack".

"I am ready for death to save the life of a single worker of my party," said a grateful Hasina who in her 33-minute speech stopped several times to wipe tears.

The AL chief specially recalled her slain party colleague Ivy Rahman who was killed in the August carnage. "She was one who used to sit here in the midst of crowd at any rally," Hasina said. "Now she is now more with us."

Referring to the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman along with most of his family in 1975, Hasina expressed her pain of losing near and dears and also her party comrades, "I have no words to express sympathy to the victims' families."

Rab has really been spared a bloodbath over this municipal polls with the deaths of Jan-e-Alam and his gang, as he [Alam] was a commissioner candidate for Ward-9," he added.

Rab officials said they would continue their hunt to nab other listed criminals of Chittagong including Raozan and Fatiqchhari.

Rab has already stepped up its surveillance in south Raozan to track down another top criminal, Azimuddin Mahmud, who was convicted in the sensational Srikantha Raxit Murder Case and sentenced to death, Rab officials said. They believe Azimuddin might be hiding in this area.

Gitu Nasir, Habib Khan, Sajjad, Selim alias BDR Selim, Fazal Huda, Bidhan Barua, Dulu, Babar, Sunil, Moshed Khan and Alami alias Etim Alam are among the criminals on the Rab's wanted list.

Meanwhile, sources said some of the top listed criminals including Shibir Nasir, Azizuya, Azrati Delwar, Bhagina Ramjan and Jamai Faruk, now in jail, are avoiding submission of bail prayers, as they are too scared of Rab to come out of the safety of jail custody.

They warned him that he would have to face dire consequence if he continues to live with his wife.

"Both my wife and me outright rejected the so-called decree and continued to live together," said Ezalul.

But the religious leaders stuck to their 'judgment' and kept insisting on his sending Anjuma to her parents, he added.

On September 23, a group of people led allegedly by Hafez Mannan, Munsi Montaz, Mominal Islam, Saidul, and Sultan swooped on their house. His father Alef Uddin and mother Rezia Khatun were seriously wounded in the attack that also left the house badly damaged.

Alef Uddin was sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

They repeatedly threatened to kill the family members if the couple does not comply with the fatwa.

"Since then, all my family members have been on the run," said Ezalul.

Ezalul, a day-labourer, said they were leading a happy conjugal life despite poverty. But after they were forced to flee their house with the 11-month-old son, they are passing the worst days of their lives, he continued.

"This government has made Bangladesh a transit route of illegal arms trafficking," he added.

JSD General Secretary Syed Zafar Sajjad and leaders Mohiuddin Khan, Badal, Shirin Akhter, Nazmul Haque Pradhan, Habibur Rahman Shawkat and Iqbal Hossain Khan also addressed the rally.

Criticising the government's reform programme, he said thousands of workers are losing jobs due to this faulty reform policy.

Inu also blasted the government for its failure to arrest the perpetrators of the August 21 attacks even after 42 days of the incident.

"The grenade attack was made when people started uniting against the coalition misrule," Inu observed.

"Since then, all my family members have been on the run," said Ezalul.

Ezalul, a day-labourer, said they along with other human-rights organisations in Rangpur plan to bring out a procession to protest the 'inactivity' of the law enforcers regarding the fatwa incident.

The co-ordinator of Blast said they along with other human-rights organisations in Rangpur plan to bring out a procession to protest the 'inactivity' of the law enforcers regarding the fatwa incident.

The top four target sectors of CVMs were base metals and articles of base metals, prepared foodstuff, beverages, spirits and vinegar, tobacco, vegetable products and plastic and rubber articles.

Meanwhile, the total number of countervailing measures (CVMs), as of December 31, 2003, stood at 100.