

Dhaka to look

FROM PAGE 12 ceives in the August 21 grenade attacks on an Awami League rally, saying, although he is yet to read the report, what is important in this case is how the government reacts to it.

Morshed was briefing reporters at the foreign ministry on his 12-day trip to New York to attend the 59th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) as its vice-president.

On the concerns that Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed last Wednesday over Indian insurgent camps in Bangladesh, he said, "To our knowledge there are no insurgents in Bangladesh and I have invited them to check for themselves." He added, however, "We will look into their concerns," and confirmed a statement of Delhi on discussions under way on the insurgent issue.

"Both of our prime ministers gave directives after their meeting in Bangkok in July to sort out all the security concerns and outstanding issues," said Morshed. "The concerns our mutual. If it is a concern of India, it is ours too, as we are trying to establish a common platform for the benefit of the peoples of the region."

He said, "Security concerns of the neighbours have to be addressed through dialogues between structural committees," adding, "I did not experience any misunderstanding during our previous discussions on the issue."

The minister quoted the Indian side as telling him they had interrogated some Indian criminals to gain information about existence of Indian insurgent camps in Bangladesh. He also referred to an Indian press report, which said Delhi has no hard evidence of such camps.

Morshed also denied a report on Dhaka's rejection of an Indian proposal for joint patrol along the 4,126-kilometre border during a meeting of the two home secretaries last month. He claimed it was Dhaka that proposed the agreed co-ordinated patrol to address Indian concerns over border security.

He explained that a joint border patrol might lead to security forces on each side crossing the border, which may have political ramifications for both neighbours leading to confusion and misunderstanding.

GRENADE ATTACKS

"That is the view of the independent commission not the position of the government," said Morshed, when asked for his comments on the judicial commission's report hinting at a 'foreign hand' in the August 21 grisly attacks that killed at least 20.

"The government will take a decision on the report based on the facts, and we should look forward to that," he maintained.

"When a foreign country is mentioned it can be any of the other 190 countries in the world," quipped the foreign minister, "So, we have to find out if there is any truth in what is being reported or whether any of the information is being misinterpreted."

UNGA AND SIDELINES Morshed told the reporters there was no serious differences of opinion in his talks with his Indian and Pakistani counterparts on the sidelines of the 59th UNGA.

"Both of them told me not to hesitate to call them for any discussion or help," he reported.

On a question if any cloud was there in his discussion with Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh due to the recent exchange of allegations on security, trade and water, Morshed said, "I did not notice any."

He reported to have stressed the importance of regional flood management in his meetings with Singh and US Secretary of State Colin Powell. "The time has come to put our heads together regionally," said Morshed as the message he conveyed to Powell and Singh.

The FM said he asked both Singh and Khursheed M Kasuri to

send their 'visionary plans' ahead of the 13th Saarc Summit in Dhaka so that a committee can set the agenda for participants to decide the direction of Saarc policies for the next decade.

On the UNGA, Morshed said he is proud to have represented Bangladesh in presiding over it for the second time after late Humayun Rashid Chowdhury. He chaired the assembly as its vice-president on the fifth day.

He also narrated his meeting with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, during which Dhaka pledged its support for a democratically elected Iraqi government with peacekeepers, in reconstruction, and health and education sectors.

He said to have reiterated to the UNSG the Dhaka's view that the root-cause of Middle East problems is the Israel-Palestine conflict, to diffuse which the roadmap to ME peace should be revived.

IMF promises to include flood assistance in PRGF

UNB, Dhaka

IMF (International Monetary Fund) Managing Director Rodrigo de Rato has assured of considering the impact of recent floods in its assistance package under the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) being provided for Bangladesh.

The IMF is channelling a fund of \$490 million in seven installments under the PRGF.

"The impact of the flood will definitely be featured in the PRGF and macroeconomic framework," he told Finance Minister Saifur Rahman as they had a meeting in Washington on Wednesday, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

Rato also assured the minister of giving due consideration to a proposal for increasing resources for the Trade Integration Mechanism (TIM) to help countries mitigate the balance of payments shortfalls likely to result from the phasing out of MFA.

He noted with satisfaction the economic performance of the government of Bangladesh and hoped that the reform programme would be continued as envisaged in the I-PRSP.

Saifur apprised the IMF executive of the impact of the recent devastating floods and also of the ongoing implementation status of the Interim PRSP.

He made a commitment to maintain macroeconomic stability and allocate increased resources to poverty reduction programmes.

He, however, mentioned that the government would require substantial external assistance for post-flood rehabilitation.

The finance and planning minister called for equitable distribution of external assistance keeping in view the status of poverty levels and number of poor population in low-income countries as well as their performance and economic management capacity.

He pointed out that countries like Bangladesh, with no default record in debt servicing and have shown good economic performance, were not getting a fair deal from the Bretton Woods Institutions in terms of resource flow.

He said that the IMF and the World Bank should help good borrowers with increased flow of resources rather than 'reward some countries through debt forgiveness resulting from bad economic performance'.

Saifur also mentioned that Bangladesh is the first country to receive assistance from the IMF through its TIM to mitigate the likely impact of MFA phase-out.

IMF Deputy Managing Director Takatoshi Kato, IMF Director David Dutton, Bangladesh Ambassador to USA Syed Hasan Ahmed, Bangladesh Bank Governor Fakhruddin Ahmed, Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan and World Bank Alternate Executive Director Akbar Ali Khan were present at the meeting.

Flyover opens to public Nov 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's first flyover in Mohakhali in the capital will be open to public on November 7.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the flyover.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda at a meeting at his ministry with authorities and officials concerned yesterday announced the date, said a communications ministry press release.

The meeting on review of the flyover's construction, inaugural preparation and plying of vehicles was told that installation of tremor controlling equipment in the flyover is on full-swing.

The government and the World Bank have jointly financed Tk 113.52 crore for the 1.01km-long flyover, the construction of which started on December 6 in 2001 under the Dhaka Urban Transport Project.

State Minister for Communications Salahuddin Ahmad, Communications Secretary M Shafiqul Islam, Dhaka Transport Coordination Board Executive Director Quamrul Islam Siddiqui were present.

Fanatics, civil

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gather and hold a demonstration at DIT Mosque after the Juma prayers and march towards Missionpara Ahmadiyya mosque.

"The Kadianis (Ahmadiyyas) are misleading the 'real Muslims' by calling their place of worship mosques," read an Aamra Dhakabashi press release yesterday.

"We don't want to capture anyone's property, but as Muslims, we have the religious obligation to save the fellow Muslims from being deceived by the Kadyanis," the press release added referring to the prospective capture of the Ahmadiyya mosque.

Meanwhile, a number of socio-cultural and political organisations and professional bodies have declared to resist the capture programme.

Led by Narayanganj Sangskritik Jote, the South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism (SAPUFC), and Ekattorer Ghatok Dalai Nirmul Committee, these organisations have asked the people to assemble at the mosque in the morning to foil the bigots' capture programme.

Superintendent of Police in Narayanganj Ibrahim Fatemi said yesterday they had taken necessary preparations to stop the anti-Ahmadiyya zealots.

Police remained posted at different points of the town yesterday. Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles might also join them today, said sources.

Police picked up two operatives of Khatme Nabuwat while they were making announcement in loud-speakers Wednesday noon to let them off an hour later.

DND dam

FROM PAGE 12 areas have again gone under water which has almost reached the previous level. The rainwater which was pumped out before has come back again."

A total of five pumps installed at Ranimahal area of Sarulia union in Demra, 17 pumps in Narayanganj district and several others are pumping out rainwater at Shyampur in Demra from the last week of September.

Besides four pumps at Shimrail known as DND pump house under the Water and Development Board are in operation round the clock to pump out logged water from DND. Yet the effort is inadequate against the huge volume of rainwater.

Dilara Mostak Nipa, a resident of Tengra, said, "Rainwater has entered our veranda. All roads have already gone under water. It seems the situation will be similar to the recent waterlogging in our area."

Mohammad Mizan, a resident of Konapara said, "We got relieved of the immediate past waterlogging but now the suffering has come back by inundating all the roads and many houses of our area."

Situation at Dogair and Dogair bazaar area has tremendously worsened as most of the houses of that area are again under water, he said.

Situation of Sanarpur, Nemaikashari, Bagmara, Kadaitali, Rasulbagh, Jalkuri, Bhuiagarh, Delpara, Lamapara, Tusharpara, Pathantali, Godhnail and Kadamtali of Siddirganj upazila in Narayanganj district and many parts of Fataullah upazila has taken a serious turn.

"We are already in trouble. Now it is becoming severe and severe," Abdul Jalil, a resident of Jalkuri Kilipara said.

In Narayanganj 43 shelter centres were opened in four union parishes -- Fataullah, Kutubpur, Godhnail and Siddirganj. Sixteen thousand people who took shelter in the last month there are still staying as the situation was not improved there until now, according to the district administration sources.

2 more held

FROM PAGE 12 Reza after hearing granted three-day remand.

The two other arrestees were also placed on three-day fresh remand.

Abdur Rahim and Waliullah alias Walin were produced before the same court on completion of three-day. The IO sought for five-day remand but the court granted three days.

The CID picked up Rahim, caretaker of a public toilet at Fulbari Railway Super Market, on September 26, while Walin was arrested from Fulbari Railway Colony two days back.

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

6 Rab men

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inspector Shakhawat Hossain, son of Anisur Rahman of Pirujali village in Joydepur, who died at the RMCH, from Mymensingh police and Habidur Mozammel Haque of Fulbari in Govindaganj upazila in Gaibandha, from third Armed Battalion Police, driver Musleh Uddin of Charfalcon village in Rangati in Laxmipur from 29 East Bengal Regiment, soldier Ferdous Alam of Talukandi in Peerganj upazila in Rangpur from OCU 15 Field Regiment Artillery, soldier Abdur Rahman of Jogihat in Ghatail upazila in Tangail from Bir Force, and gunner ABM Rabiul Alam of Sutanara village in Sariakandi upazila in Bogra from Bangladesh Naval Academy in Potenga.

The driver and helpers of the bus fled leaving the Rab vehicle smashed on the road.

The Rab, police and army high-ups have visited the spot.

Lashing rain brings

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"The well marked low in India has intensified into a land depression and remained almost stationary on the Gangetic plain. The more rain will occur, the weaker the depression will be," said Arzumand Habib, deputy director of Meteorological Department. "But it depends on wind situation and on many other factors," she added.

Dhaka had a 97-mm of rainfall in 24 hours till 6:00pm yesterday, reminding its residents of the horror of 341-mm rain for four straight days last month that sent most parts of the capital under knee- to waist-deep water.

Gusty winds uprooted many trees, blocking roads and causing traffic tailbacks in most parts of the capital.

The Secretariat compound also reeled under water. Attendance at government and private offices was very thin and banking activities slowed, especially in Motijheel commercial hub, as rainwater inundated many ground-floor banks.

Markets and shopping malls looked almost deserted.

Rain swamped the VIP Road in front of the Prime Minister's Office and many other major city roads including Manik Mia Avenue, Bijoy Sarani, Dar-us-Salam Road, Airport Road, Mirpur Road, Outer Circular Road and Bijoynagar road.

People stranded at bus stands and in passenger buses, three-wheelers and taxicabs had suffered heavily.

A small number of rickshaws and three-wheelers braved the inundated roads only to charge twice the

usual fare.

Submerged manholes and potholes on roads added to people's sufferings, as wheels of many rickshaws slipped into the hidden traps and passengers fell down in water.

Malibagh, Shantinagar, Motijheel, Khilgaon, Badda, Gulshan, Banani, Dhanmondi, Kazipara, Mirpur, Shukrabad and most parts of old Dhaka were the worst-hit areas.

Water entered ground floors of many houses in the capital and inside Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra embankment. Hundreds of slum-dwellers moved onto streets as their shanties went under knee-deep water.

AL leaders

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the AL's view and supported the hartal programme.

Both the parties will observe October 10; the day coalition government marks its three years in office, as 'Black Day for Nation'.

Yesterday's meeting also called on the people to observe the hartal and show a no-confidence in the government.

Leaders of Dhaka city unit AL, Jatiya Sramik League, Awami Jubo League, Mahila League, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Krishok League, Sechchha Sebok League and Jubo Mahila League attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Dhaka City unit AL held an extended meeting of its different thana units in the run-up to the October 10 hartal.

Tax case against Ershad adjourned till Nov 13

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned until November 13 the hearing of the income tax corruption case against former president HM Ershad.

Judge Rezaul Karim Khan of the Special Court for Dhaka Division issued the order following a time petition by the defence lawyers.

Moving the petition, Advocate Sheikh Sirajul Islam said he had earlier filed another petition to revert the case to argument from judgement. He had some important points that were not discussed during the trial, though he had completed his arguments, he reasoned.

As he was not in position to take part in that petition hearing, he prayed for adjournment.

Ershad was absent from the court due to inclement weather.

The court has adjourned the case thrice following time petitions by the defence lawyers.

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (Bac) filed the case against Ershad and three tax officials of on July 27, 1992.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) gave the Bac a nod to press charges against the accused on November 30, 1992, but decided to exempt the taxmen from the case the same day.

The Bac in the case filed with Ramna Police Station alleged Ershad, while in power, paid Tk 7.43 lakh as income tax for six years (1983-1989) but withdrew Tk 2.76 lakh later without submitting any documents.

The investigation officer of the case pressed charges on December 19, 1992, stating Ershad as the lone accused and showing the taxmen as prosecution witnesses.

The court framed charges against the former president on June 17, 1993 and recorded statements of the prosecution witnesses during the trial.

Austria's Jelinek

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which was made into an acclaimed film by Michael Haneke in 2001, will take home the prize sum of 10 million kronor (1.1 million euros, 1.3 million dollars).

Her texts defy exact definition. They contain prose, poetry, incantation and hymn, theatrical scenes and filmic sequences.

One of her basic themes is the inability of women to "fully come to life in a world where they are painted over with stereotypical images", the Academy said in its citation.

In "The Piano Teacher", as in a series of other novels, Jelinek presents a pitiless world of violence and submission, hunter and prey, the jury said.

She will receive the Nobel Prize, which consists of the prize money, a gold medal and a diploma, from Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf at a formal ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of the death of Alfred Nobel, the founder of the Nobel Prizes, in 1896.

The Literature Prize was the fourth of the six coveted awards to be handed out this week.

The Peace Prize will be announced on Friday, and the final prize, that for Economics, will be announced on Monday.

Car bomb

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timer.

The prayer gathering in Rasheedabad Square had lasted the whole night and the crowd was beginning to disperse when the pre-dawn calm was shattered by the explosion.

Multan is known as the "city of saints" for the numerous Sufi Musli saints buried in glittering blue-tiled shrines, but has long been a hotbed of Islamic extremism.

Pakistani Information Minister Sheikh Rashid condemned the attack as "an act of brutal terrorism". Outside the hospital, victims' relatives chanted slogans against Shias and vowed revenge.

Hundreds of police and paramilitary troops were deployed to guard mosques and religious schools in several cities to prevent follow-up violence.

Ludhianvi called a two-day mourning period for Thursday and Friday.

Rain to continue

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said Dhaka residents will not see the sun before Monday as the weather will remain cloudy until that time.

Weather officials said heavy rainfall with gusty wind may occur in many places in Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Sylhet division until this evening.

The met office warned a three to four-foot high tidal surge may strike the coastal areas today due to stormy wind in sea.

It advised hoisting cautionary signal number two at inland ports and signal number three at maritime ports. All fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay should remain close to the coast till further information, it added.

Meanwhile, the depression formed in the Bay three days ago first moved towards Orissa coast. The maximum sustained wind within 44 km of the depression centre was about 40 kph rising to 50 kph in gusts/squalls.

On Wednesday, the depression turned into a well marked low but it intensified into a land depression again yesterday, Indian met office informed Dhaka met office.

Crime takes on

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ber of elite crime-busting forces over the last few months a slight improvement has been witnessed but a series of grenade attacks has brought a deeper dimension in crime creating a deeper sense of insecurity among the people.

Crime statistics indicate home ministry's performance in the first three years of BNP-led government's tenure was not satisfactory as its anticrime measures seem to have a little impact on the widespread criminal incidents across the country.

Grenade attacks on political rallies, shrines and cinemas, brutal killings of political leaders and journalists in broad daylight, increased activities of outlaws, extremists and fanatic forces, abduction of businesspeople and retrieval of their shredded bodies are some grisly examples of crime that have overshadowed the anticrime steps.

People are still being haunted by the horrors of grenade attacks on an Awami League (AL) rally on August 21 in Dhaka, a futile attempt on the life of Leader of the Opposition and AL President Sheikh Hasina, that killed 20 people and injured more than 200.

The killings of AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master (May 7, 2004), Khulna AL leader Monzurul Imam (August 25, 2003) and former AL lawmaker Montajuddin Ahmed in Natore (June 7, 2004) are still fresh in memory.

Eight major bomb and grenade attacks that left 63 people killed in the last three years sent a chill down the nation's spine. These include bomb and grenade blasts at Shahjalal shrine in January and May and bomb explosions in two cinemas in Sylhet in August.

The grenade attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury in Sylhet on May 21 drew attention of the world community about Bangladesh's vulnerable crime situation.

The retrieval of the bodies of old Dhaka businessman Shamsul Islam and his son Russel Sheikh in 200 pieces and abduction of Chittagong BNP leader and magnate Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury worried the business community.

The government enacted speedy trial act and formed speedy trial tribunal, launched Operation Clean Heart and Operation Spiderweb by joint forces and a bombing operation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts but failed to make significant improvement.

The Operation Clean Heart in 2002, manned by army, police and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) drew widespread criticism for 54 deaths in their custody. The recently launched Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) is also going ahead with the same strategy.

During the Operation Clean Heart army showed reason for deaths in their custody as "heart attacks" while the Rab is saying the criminals are being killed in 'crossfire'.

Crime-Busting Rapid Action Team worked for more than a year in Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) area and then the government deployed 'Cobra' and 'Cheeta' drafted with trained policemen to launch a crackdown on the criminals.

Human rights group Odhikar says a total of 111 people were killed in the hands of law enforcers in last nine months of this year. Since Rab hit the street 32 crime suspects including four listed criminals were killed in 'crossfire'.

Police sources claimed law and order improved with the arrest and death of top criminals but new gangs are replacing them and taking control of the crime-prone areas.

Speedy Trial Tribunal that the government introduced to ensure swift trial of criminals so far disposed of 470 cases out of 742, sentencing 216 people to death.

In the biggest-ever arms haul on April 2 this year in Chittagong, the police made a chance seizure of 10 truckloads of rocket launchers, hand grenades, AK-47 rifles and over 18 lakh

bullets. The haul dwarfs the seizure of a mind-boggling 100,000 rifle bullets and 200 kg of explosives in Bogra.

Till date investigators could not identify or arrest the gunrunners or the mastermind behind such big arms and ammunition hauls that raised many questions about the vulnerable system of vigilance by the law enforcement agencies.

The people in northwestern Bangladesh saw the rise of Bangla Bhai, self-styled operation commander of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) whose fanatic operatives killed at least 15 people sending a terror wave in the region. Prime minister's reported instruction to the police to arrest Bangla Bhai is yet to be carried out.

Seven journalists were killed and 678 were subjected to repression during the last three years while 1236 other journalists given death threat.

On July 24 this year, Chittagong businessman Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury was kidnapped. Still no one knows where he is, despite repeated government commitments to rescue him. Four other magnets of the port city were abducted after Jamal.

The grisly incineration of 11 members of a minority family in Banshkhal in Chittagong district in November last year and three of a family in Bagherhat were followed by another attempt to incinerate nine of a family in Jhalakati.

Ten passengers were burnt alive when a BRTC double-decker caught fire in front of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on June 4 this year. Investigators suspected it as an act of arson but could not yet find any clue.

Some 50 policemen were killed in the last three years while encountering the criminals. Of them, some 20 were killed in shooting and bomb throwing by extremists in Khulna and other districts in the southwestern 'valley of death.'

In the recent wave of attacks on the law enforcers, two policemen were shot dead in Motijheel on June 20 this year and one constable at Rayerbazar in the capital on July 12.

People's distrust of law enforcers triggered several incidents of killing of suspected criminals in mob beating. The most dreadful incident took place in a remote char (shoal) area of Noakhali when mobs lynched 39 alleged forest bandits in December last year.

Locals alleged that a ruling BNP legislator had instigated them to engage in the massacre of bandits who established a reign of terror in the seaboard district.

The government however claims law and order has improved a lot. A parliamentary body yesterday said the law and order is much better than in any other time in the past, although statistics show no significant change in the crime scenario.

According to press reports and human rights groups, about 4,500 people were killed in 2003, up from 4,000 a year ago. Home ministry statistics however show 3,503 people were killed in 2002 and 3,550 in 2003.

Police sources said on average 350 people were killed a month from January to June this year. The trend shows a little improvement from July to September when average 300 people were killed, although human rights groups believe the figures are much higher.

The rights groups say 395 people were killed in September, 779 in August and 776 in July across Bangladesh.

The home ministry records also show a total of 1,27,616 crime incidents in 2002 and 1,25,639 in 2003. From January to June this year, on average 10,500 crime incidents occurred a month across the country.

King Sihanouk

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abdicated," Prince Norodom Ranariddh told reporters.

The king -- a major Asian political figure of the 20th century -- posted a note on his website late Wednesday saying ill health prevented him from staying on as king and asking Cambodians