

Cops charged over Beslan siege

BBC ONLINE

Russia has charged three police officials with criminal negligence over the Beslan school siege in which more than 350 hostages died.

Deputy police chiefs were charged in the North Ossetia region, where Beslan is located, and adjacent Ingushetia, where some hostage-takers came from.

A prosecutor said an inquiry into officials' poor performance is ongoing.

the charges are the first to be brought in what is likely to be a lengthy investigation.

Two police chiefs who are the direct bosses of the three men will be charged when they come out of hospital, where they are apparently being treated for complaints not linked to the siege.

Two of those already charged are based in the Ossetian Pravoberezhny district and one in the Malgobek district of Ingushetia.

Prosecutors will not give details of the charges, but a spokesman told the BBC the list was long.

It is thought to include failure to provide adequate patrols of the border area, and responsibility for the presence of a rebel camp in

Ingushetia.

The only gunman captured alive by Russian forces says the hostage-takers trained there for their attack.

Residents of Beslan welcomed the charges as a start, though they are furious that the gunmen ever made it to their town.

Many believe the gunmen bribed their way through police checkpoints.

Many local people blame the police for not preventing the militants from entering the school and for not keeping local militia men away once the shooting started.

More than 1,000 people were taken hostage after more than 30 armed men seized the school during a ceremony to mark the first day of term on 1 September.

A siege ended in bloodshed two days later when explosives planted by the hostage-takers went off inside and special forces stormed the building. Half the victims were children.

Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev later took responsibility for the hostage-taking and other recent attacks on civilians in Russia.

The Russian parliament is conducting an investigation of its own into the events.

BDR on high alert

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A BDR high official preferring anonymity told The Daily Star that besides alert watch on the borders, greater diplomatic efforts are required for a quick solution to the new push-in problem.

Between January and April this year, 60 Bangla speaking Indians were pushed in by the BSF in nine separate attempts. However, they were immediately pushed back by the BDR, sources say.

On July 19, three Indians, two men and one woman, were pushed in close to the Ghaghra Border Outpost in Panchagarh. The three were pushed back by the BDR on July 20 through a different outpost, sources say.

No further push-in attempts were made till October 1 when five Indians – two men, one woman and two children – were pushed in through the Balarhaat Border Outpost (BOP) under Kurigram's Fulbari Upazila.

The BDR pushed all the five back through another BOP that evening, sources say.

On October 17 and 18, nine Indians were pushed in near Amarkhana BOP in Panchagarh, who were then pushed back between October 19 and 20. At least eight similar attempts were foiled in October, sources add.

BDR officials said the push-in attempts are being made largely at the northwest and western borders and no flag meetings between the BDR and the BSF were held on the issue.

Sources said BDR's Rangpur Sector Commander Colonel Lutfur Rahman has discussed the push-in with his BSF counterpart Deputy Inspector General Harish Kumar over telephone on Monday. Col. Rahman has also proposed a sector commander-level meeting, but the BSF did not make any decision until yesterday.

When contacted over telephone last evening, Col. Rahman refused to comment on the matter and only said: "The situation is now calm."

But despite the calm, the border people are tensed by the possibility of further flare-ups.

Al condemns

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torture, cruelty and degradation".

Amnesty's report accused Washington of stepping onto a "well-trodden path of violating basic rights in the name of national security or 'military necessity'."

"The war mentality the government has adopted has not been matched with a commitment to the laws of war and it has discarded fundamental human rights principles along the way," it said.

At best, Washington was guilty of setting conditions for torture and cruel treatment by lowering safeguards and failing to respond adequately to allegations of abuse, it said.

At worst, it had authorised interrogation techniques which flouted its international obligation to reject torture and ill-treatment under any circumstances.

HAUNTING IMAGES

An army general acknowledged for the first time in August that US troops tortured prisoners at Abu Ghraib jail in Iraq.

Pentagon leaders and Bush's officials had previously steered clear of describing the physical abuse and sexual humiliation of Iraqi prisoners as torture.

Photographs published in April showed US soldiers posing and smiling as naked, male Iraqi prisoners were stacked in a pyramid or positioned to simulate sex acts with one another.

One prisoner was standing on a

box with his head hooded and wires attached to his hands. He had been told he would be electrocuted if he fell off the box.

Amnesty said the US and the world would be "haunted by these and other images for years to come". They were "icons of a government's failure to put human rights at its heart".

Yesterday's report -- "Human dignity denied: Torture and accountability in the 'war on terror'" -- urged Bush and Kerry to commit to opening an independent inquiry into all US interrogation and detention policies.

"The core message of this report is that the prevention of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is primarily a matter of political will," it said.

Amnesty also criticised a tendency in the US to gloss over aspects of war and violence -- referring to torture and degrading treatment as "stress and duress" for example -- which it said threatened to promote tolerance of them.

"The human rights violations which the US government has been so reluctant to call torture when committed by its own agents are annually described as such by the State Department when they occur in other countries," the report said.

"Double standards have greatly undermined the credibility of the US's global discourse on human rights," it said.

Govt inertia to fight

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of the beneficiary families of Rangpur, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat districts will receive a combined package of loan and grant ranging from Tk 5,000 to Tk 20,000.

The number of Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) cards issued per union in the districts will also be increased from the present 2,000 to 2,500.

But opposition members of the parliamentary body including GM Quader of Jatiya Party observed people in the region are starving because of crisis of money and work. The committee suggested starting the package without delay.

"If the government's financial assistance package starts after Eid, it will take one more month to implement. By the time people of the region will have some work," Abdul Mannan said. "They need financial assistance now."

About agri-rehabilitation programmes, members of the parliamentary body asked the ministry of agriculture to raise the number of farmers who will benefit from the programmes that started after the July-August flooding.

The ministry has initiated the

flood rehabilitation programmes with a Tk 163 crore fund to distribute seeds and fertilisers among 26 lakh marginal farmers who were affected by the floods across the country.

Terming the initiative inadequate, members of the committee said a total of 48.84 lakh farmers have been affected by the floods and the rehabilitation programmes would cover around 50 percent of the affected farmers.

Jatiya Party lawmaker GM Quader said the ministry has claimed people that they were providing fertilisers and seeds among marginal farmers. "But when we ask farmers they say they did not get any assistance."

He proposed distribution of adequate fertilisers and seeds among farmers at a fixed rate.

The agriculture ministry is providing 25 kg fertiliser and 3 kg seeds for each of the 3 lakh marginal farmers in the first phase.

Awami League lawmaker Dr Abdur Razzak alleged the government is distributing substandard, mixed fertilisers among the farmers. "Quality of the mixed fertiliser is questionable," he told the meeting.

Khaleda wants

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implemented a lot of socio-economic development programmes during the last three years and it would continue to do so to maintain the process in the next two years.

Khaleda, also the chairperson of the BNP, asked the party leaders and workers to strengthen the organisation in their respective areas.

She asked them to hold more meetings in the district, upazila and unions levels after Eid and also to face the opposition's negative activities politically.

The meeting was addressed by more than 20 field-level leaders of the party. BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan also spoke.

The prime minister said the government had faced the devastating floods successfully and is now carrying out the post-flood rehabilitation programme.

She said the opposition has no issue in their hands to wage anti-government movement and all their attempts including the "rump card" has failed.

The prime minister said the opposition might try to agitate in the streets in the coming winter and asked her party leaders and workers to remain alert against their activities.

In his speech, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan urged the party leaders and workers to create public opinion against hartal.

The field level leaders, in their deliberations, discussed political and organisational matters and also the development programmes of the government.

They discussed the law and order situation, prices of the essentials, terrorism, upazila elections and performance of Rab.

The grassroots level leaders called for holding such meetings between the party chairperson and the filed-level leaders.

INDIAN PM

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He said India wanted a "neighbourhood of peace so that our neighbours and we can focus on the urgent tasks of development. However, our pursuit of peace does not imply that we will relax our vigil or compromise on our defence."

His remarks came two days after Myanmar assured India that it would not allow its territory to be used for activities directed against India.

So far India has coordinated action against Indian insurgents only with Bhutan whose Royal Army had destroyed the ultras' camps on its territory in December last year while the Indian army dealt with those insurgents who crossed over to India.

India has also asked Bangladesh to act against the northeastern Indian insurgents in the latter's territory but Dhaka denies their presence in its soil.

EU in turmoil over commission team

REUTERS, France

The incoming head of the European Commission has withdrawn his proposed EU executive team to avoid an unprecedented European Parliament defeat, plunging the 25-nation bloc into turmoil.

Jose Manuel Barroso's last-minute retreat created political uncertainty yesterday just two days before EU leaders are to sign the recently enlarged bloc's first constitution in Rome.

"I have come to the conclusion that if a vote is taken today, the outcome will not be positive for EU institutions or for the European project," Jose Manuel Barroso told the assembly an hour before the investiture vote had been due.

"In these circumstances, I have decided not to submit the new European Commission for your approval today," he said. "I need more time to look at this issue."

Barroso's team faced likely rejection after he refused to replace his nominated justice and security chief, Italy's Rocco Buttiglione, who outraged many lawmakers with his conservative Roman Catholic views on homosexuality and marriage.

The president-elect declined to say if he would now replace individuals or just reshuffle the 25-member team's portfolios.

"My intention is to change what is necessary and sufficient," the former Portuguese prime minister told a news conference, saying he would consult EU leaders and parliament before putting forward a new proposal "in the next few weeks".

The delay means the outgoing Commission led by Romano Prodi of Italy remains in office temporarily, but it should not seriously affect EU decision-making, officials said.

Commission spokesman Reijo Kemppinen said Prodi had agreed to stay on at the request of Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency.

Lawmakers from across the political spectrum hailed Barroso's

climbdown as a victory for the growing power of the EU parliament, often regarded as a talking-shop until it forced a previous Commission to resign en masse in 1999.

It could transform Friday's glittering constitution signing ceremony, meant to launch the public campaign for ratification in member states, into a crisis summit on the standoff between the bloc's main institutions, diplomats said.

Parliament President Josep Borrell said the delay took the EU into "virgin territory" since the new Commission had been due to take office next Monday. But since there was no proposed Commission to approve, parliament could not vote, he ruled.

Outgoing Commission Vice-President Neil Kinnock told reporters he expected Buttiglione, a confidant of Pope John Paul, would resign.

But Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said Buttiglione remained Rome's EU nominee "at present" and it was too early to say if it was open to changing its candidate.

Liberal floor leader Graham Watson, whose pivotal 88-member centrist group denied Barroso the votes he needed, said the Commission president would be unwise to keep Buttiglione in his team if he wanted broad parliamentary support.

The incoming Commission chief had made no secret of his wish to keep outgoing Italian Competition Commissioner Mario Monti, but Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi decided otherwise in July.

Leaders of the 268-member conservative European People's Party, Barroso's staunchest supporters, said they concluded at dawn they did not have sufficient backing from other groups to be sure of even a tiny majority in the 731-seat assembly.

Parliament cannot veto individual members but can vote down the whole team.

HC asks govt

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alike under the section.

The bench will hear the case in full on November 24.

During the submission of the supplementary affidavit yesterday, the government side opposed the petitioners' appeal for a list of arrestees, saying it had already provided such a list. The defence was referring to a list of people incarcerated under the same section of the DMP Ordinance during the mass arrest in April that it submitted to the court in July.

Moving on behalf of the petitioners Dr M Zahir argued if the list is not provided, the people arrested would be unaccounted for. He said the list is a must to know the condition of the arrestees and secure justice for them, specially the poor victims.

Barrister Sara Hossain and Barrister Tanzir Ahmed assisted Dr Zahir, while Additional Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali and Assistant Attorney General Adilur Rahman Shuvo represented the governmentside.

Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain O Salish Kendra, a legal aid and rights organisation, lodged the supplementary affidavit on behalf of the petitioners.

Leading organisations of the petitioning groups include the HRLAC of Bangladesh Bar Council, Ain O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Bangladesh National Lawyers' Association, Centre for Development Studies, Hotline Bangladesh, Kormojibi Nari, Odhikar, Shomilinto Nari Somaj, Somnilto Samajik Andolan and Samajtantrik Mohila Front.

Parliament in uproar over Musharraf's army role

AFF, Islamabad

Pakistan's parliament was in uproar again as opposition parties tried to block a controversial bill that will allow President Pervez Musharraf to remain army chief.

The bill, which passed the national assembly or lower house on October 14 despite noisy protests, is awaiting senate endorsement before Musharraf can sign it into law.

Opposition parties failed in their attempt to stop the government introducing the bill in the senate yesterday, leading to uproar.

"There was pandemonium in the house," Pakistan People's Party Senator Raza Rabbani told the news agency yesterday.

The opposition parties had argued that the bill should be circulated to gauge public opinion before being considered by the senate, where the government also has a majority.

The bill will now be debated in the senate before being swiftly passed.

Musharraf has ruled as president and army chief since seizing power in a bloodless coup in 1999.

He publicly pledged last year to relinquish his military post by the end of end of 2004 and acknowl-

edged that a president in uniform was "undemocratic".

His promise was part of a deal with a powerful group of Islamist parties in return for its parliamentary support for constitutional amendments that validated his presidency and gave him sweeping powers.

One of these powers was the authority to dismiss parliament.

Musharraf has since reneged on the pledge, which was also enshrined in the constitution. He argues that the dual posts are necessary for him to pursue his nation's campaign against terrorism and diplomatic efforts to resolve the 57-year dispute with India over Kashmir.

The new law will again alter the constitution to enable him to remain army chief.

Western governments were initially extremely critical of Musharraf's seizure of power. Pakistan was subjected to sanctions and suspended from the Commonwealth.

His international reputation has since been rehabilitated after backing the United States in its global war on terrorism. Pakistan was readmitted to the Commonwealth in May.

Barisal hospital

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126 third and fourth-class employees was called off yesterday, as the health ministry cancelled the appointments.

A high-powered probe committee of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had found irregularities and corruption in the recruitment process and recommended cancelling the appointments, sources said.

Following the decision, the staffs and workers of the BSBMCH suspended the strike until the Eid-ul-Fitr after a meeting with the mayor of Barisal City Corporation, lawmaker Mujibur Rahman Sarwar and the minister in-charge of the district.

The protesters hailed the decision of the ministry and demanded transparency in appointment procedure.

However, they will resume the strike after the Eid if their other demands including removal of 'corrupt' Doctors Association of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Medical Association leaders and punishment of those responsible for shady appointment are not met.

Earlier on Tuesday, the activities at the BSBMCH came to a standstill on the first day of the strike.

Civil surgeon

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Recruitment in those 19 posts, finalised on October 20, enraged the supporters of the deputy minister.

On Monday, 10 youths reportedly belonging to Natore BNP, Jubo Dal and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, went to the civil surgeon's office at around 1:00pm and asked officials and employees to leave the office. They locked doors of all the rooms, the main entrance and left with the keys. Official activities were virtually suspended for two days as no one dared open the locks in fear of violence.

The office resumed after local BNP leadership returned the keys yesterday.

Among the newly appointed employees, 13 were recruited on the recommendation of the deputy minister, five on that of a state minister while one was recommended by a BNP lawmaker, said Shahjahan Ali.

Still disappointed with the recruitment, both the ministers had complained of irregularities in the recruitment process prompting action against the civil surgeon, said sources.

India to retain act

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Union against 'foreigners,' an euphemism for migrants from Bangladesh.

The BJP-led NDA government viewed the IMDT Act as a major hurdle in detecting and deporting illegal migrants. Former Assam Governor Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha had in a report two years ago warned against demographic change in the state in the wake of migration from Bangladesh and recommended repeal of the Act.

The NDA government had also introduced a bill in the last session of the previous parliament to repeal the Act but it was promptly referred to a select committee headed by senior Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee who is now defence minister.

The BJP is of the view that IMDT Act was ineffective in checking the problem of illegal migration and wanted the problem to be tackled under the Foreigners Act. One basic problem of the IMDT Act, according to the BJP, was that the onus of proving a person illegal migrant under the law was on the complainant.

Congress, by contrast, feels that the IMDT Act works as a bulwark against arbitrary declaration of genuine Assam residents as illegal migrants.

Official estimates say so far only 1,494 people have been declared as illegal migrants by tribunals under IMDT Act, which is less than one percent of the total estimated migrants in Assam.

The change of government in Assam, where Congress returned to power replacing Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) a couple of years ago, also brought about a change in the stand of the government on the IMDT Act. The present Congress government headed by Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi has filed an affidavit in a court reversing the stand of AGP government on the law.

The Indian cabinet's decision to retain IMDT Act assumes significance in the backdrop of increasing violence in Assam where more than 60 people were killed in bomb blasts set off by suspected United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) outfits last month.

The Indian government, however, last week gave the green signal to Assam government's peace talks with NDFB, a major insurgent group of ethnic Bodos.

Tk 607cr

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the people, fertiliser importers, dealers and all concerned of the policy.

As per the guidelines, fertiliser importers will have to submit a stock report to the ministry within three days of publication of the notice, showing their respective stocks of TSP, DAP and MOP fertilisers imported since July 1, 2003.

US interests 'at risk' in Jordan

BBC ONLINE

Several plots to attack American targets in Jordan have been foiled but US citizens remain under threat, the US State Department has said.

Speaking through the US embassy in the Jordanian capital, Amman, it urged its citizens to take extra precautions.

The embassy's notice warns of extremists who "continue to call for violence against Americans".

It gives no details of the alleged plots but links them to "groups loyal to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and al-Qaeda".

Jordanian-born Zarqawi is thought to be behind a series of kidnappings, killings and attacks in Iraq.

The US has offered a \$25m reward for his death or capture.

Security in Jordan was tightened in April after the authorities said they had prevented plans to set off a huge chemical explosion in Amman.

The US embassy said it had "received credible reports that several plots to attack American interests in Jordan have been disrupted over the past six months".

It warns that extremists currently present in Jordan are "intent on harming Americans" and do not distinguish between civilian and official targets.

US companies and individuals are urged to increase their security measures in light of the threat.

Jordan's army already protects all major government buildings, with numerous roadblocks in place.

He says the US embassy's warning is a reminder that pro-Western Jordan is a prime target for attack by extremists.

Earlier this month, Jordan charged 13 suspected Muslim militants, including Zarqawi, over alleged plots to attack targets in the kingdom.

Earlier, New Zealand had piled on the runs thanks to a scintillating 202 from captain Stephen Fleming who had begun the day on 137 not out. It was the second double hundred for Fleming in Tests. The knock was also the third 200 in Chittagong after Pakistan's Yousuf Youhana's 204 not out in 2001 and South Africa's Jacques Rudolph's unbeaten 222 in 2002.

Resuming on 338 for three, New Zealand lost Nathan Astle (39) in the morning lbw to an armer from left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique that caught the veteran batsman on the crease. Astle had put on 99 with

Purchase of Rab vehicles

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which need to be examined. "Only after that will we decide about whether to approve the proposal," he added.

On the selection of bidders for the proposed purchase of vehicles, the finance minister said the government would buy such vehicles that can run on the road. Four companies have been awarded the job to supply vehicles for police and Rab.

These are Pacific Motors Limited, Rangs Motors, Navana Motors and Khan & Sons Automobiles Limited. Vehicles worth Tk 53 crore would be bought from Pacific Motors and the rest involving Tk 30 crore from the other companies.

Under the proposal, police would have 30 new highway patrol cars each costing Tk 8.96 lakh (Pacific), 73 patrol jeeps each at Tk 17.33 lakh (Pacific), four protection jeeps each at Tk 18.11 lakh (Navana), two minibuses each worth Tk 24.83 lakh (Pacific), four 52-seat buses each at Tk 28.39 lakh (Pacific), 50 haulers each at Tk 12.93 lakh (Navana), 32 three-ton trucks each at Tk 16.67 lakh (Pacific), 32 prisoners' van each costing Tk 16.67 lakh (Pacific) and two mobile evidence collection van each worth Tk 76.86 lakh (Khan & Sons).

Elite crime-busting force Rab would get 37 minibuses each at Tk 9.80 lakh (Rangs), eight ambulances each worth Tk 17.46 lakh (Khan & Sons), nine minibuses each costing Tk 23.52 lakh (Pacific), 15 trucks each at Tk 12.60 lakh (Khan & Sons), 20 yellow taxicabs each worth Tk 8.40 lakh (Navana), 75 cars each costing Tk 6.57 lakh (Pacific), 67 Mitsubishi jeeps each at Tk 17 lakh (Rangs), 107 Nissan jeeps each worth Tk 16.64 lakh (Pacific) and 75 microbuses each worth Tk 9.38 lakh (Rangs).

A Chinese company also took part in the bidding and was the lowest

Sign deal

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take immediate steps to receive the money.

Admitting the threat of money withdrawal by Spanish government, Shipping Secretary Ismail Zabihullah told The Daily Star that the ministry processed all the documents and submitted those to the cabinet purchase committee for final approval.

"The committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday and we hope they would approve the proposal," he said, adding that if the cabinet committee approves the proposal, there would be no problem in getting the money.

Meanwhile, the shipping ministry sources said the delay in releasing the money was due to some other factors related to the donor country.

There was an international tender for purchasing dredgers where the lowest offer was higher than the loan amount. As it was a tied loan, Bangladesh has to accept the tender from the companies of the donor country.

Consequently, that tender was cancelled and bids were invited in a re-tender which took much time, the source commented.

Fleming cracks

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third day needing a further 264 runs to make the tourists bat again.

Disappointingly for the local crowd, both their home boys Nafees Iqbal and debutant Aftab Ahmed also got out after looking comfortable.

Nafees (13) playing his first Test here, started with a lovely straight drive for four off left-arm paceman James Franklin. He followed that up with two more classy boundaries. But left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori in his second over, found the outside edge of the 19-year-old opener's bat and Scott Styris took a one-handed catch at short gully which was given by TV umpire Aktar Uddin. Bangladesh were 34-2 then.

Aftab's first stroke was a superb back-foot drive off Vettori. The diminutive youngster was playing confidently with a rejuvenated Javed Omar. The two put on 32 before Aftab was adjudged lbw to Vettori for 20.

Javed meanwhile was uncharacteristically aggressive. He pulled paceman Jacob Oram twice to the mid-wicket fence and also swept Vettori for two boundaries in the penultimate over of the day. He was unbeaten on 45 (85 balls) at close, just eight short of becoming the second Bangladeshi batsman after Habibul Bashar to complete 1,000 runs in Test cricket.

Earlier, New Zealand had piled on the runs thanks to a scintillating 202 from captain Stephen Fleming who had begun the day on 137 not out. It was the second double hundred for Fleming in Tests. The knock was also the third 200 in Chittagong after Pakistan's Yousuf Youhana's 204 not out in 2001 and South Africa's Jacques Rudolph's unbeaten 222 in 2002.

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JS session

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the August 21 grisly grenade attack," said Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid, adding, "We will also want to know why the speaker in the previous session refused to adjourn the House's regular business to discuss the crucial issue."

Meanwhile, the government has plans to pass the much-talked-about bill regarding election in the reserved seats for women in this session.

Besides, two other bills, one pertaining to granting the World Bank immunity and the other one to bring amendments to the definition of contempt of court, are in line to be placed in the session.

The AL parliamentary party also sits today to discuss its strategy at the session.

The current parliament began its journey on October 28, 2001 amid boycott by the main opposition Awami League. The opposition lawmakers joined parliament after eight months. The House has already passed 226 workdays while the AL attended on 74 workdays.

Kerry courts middle class

soldiers, as well as wounded servicemen and women.

"These four years have brought moments I could not foresee and will not forget," Bush says. "I've learned firsthand that ordering Americans into battle is the hardest decision, even when it is right." The commercial will be seen by a limited audience, given that it will run only on a couple national cable news networks.

Still, neither campaign was going upbeat, nor were their supporters.

Hard-hitting leaflets lined mailboxes in a dozen or so hotly contested states. A glossy mailing by the Pennsylvania Democratic State Committee showed burning roadside wreckage in Iraq, with US soldiers looking on, and the headline "Wrong Choices...Less Secure."

A Republican National Committee mailing showed pictures of Jane Fonda and Michael Moore, two anti-war liberals supporting Kerry, and the headline, "John Kerry's heart and soul of America?"

Kerry's latest ad accuses the Bush administration of failing to secure nearly 400 tons of explosives that disappeared from a military installation south of Baghdad around the time U.S. forces were toppling Saddam Hussein's government.

Kerry pressed the point at rallies Tuesday, telling supporters in Green Bay, Wis., "the explosives" "could be in the hands of terrorists, used to attack our troops or our people."

"We're in a bigger mess by the day and this president can't see it or can't admit it, but either way, America is less safe," Kerry said.