

## 40 killed as Iraq

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exclusively Sunni Arabs, a minority that had dominated Iraq until Saddam Hussein's ouster two years ago.

The explosions on both days were carried out at times when large crowds are on the capital's streets. Wednesday night's bombs came hours before an 11 p.m. curfew when many residents are out at eateries or chatting on the streets before locking themselves inside their homes.

Thursday's twin explosions took place when many are just beginning their daily routines. The attacks in Karradah happened nearly simultaneously, police Lt. Col. Salman Abdul Karim and officer Ahmed Hatam al-Sharie said. Five police officers were among the 15 dead.

A young boy, his left leg missing from below the knee, sat on the sidewalk near a mangled bicycle, screaming as a man tried to comfort him. The force of the blasts blew off store shutters, and the surrounding sidewalks were covered with debris, including shattered glass, concrete slabs and charred vegetables and fruit.

A few trees were toppled, scattering leaves on the sidewalk.

Separately, a car bomb detonated by remote control hit an Iraqi police patrol in Tuz Khormato, north

## Interpol, FBI men talk with investigators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The visiting Interpol and FBI members yesterday held talks with the investigators concerned and top officials of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police regarding the August 21 carnage at an Awami League rally in the capital last year.

Interpol terrorism expert Marc H Beauchemin and ballistic expert Grey Lee George, and FBI special agent Trung Vu were also learnt to have quizzed George, a suspect in the grisly grenade attack that left 23 people, including AL's women affairs secretary Ivy Rahman, killed and at least 200 others maimed.

The three foreign experts began their work yesterday, a day after their arrival on invitation from Bangladesh government following recent disclosure of 'crucial clues' to the incident by three arrestees.

They visited the CID office at Malibagh in the morning and reviewed the progress of previous investigations.

They examined pieces of evidence that included post-carnage video tape, footage of the rally, statements of the three arrestees — top criminal Arman Khan, George and Mokhlesur Rahman, an AL leader and former ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation — sources said.

Besides, they examined statements of AL leaders and activists who were injured in the incident.

Sources said the visitors inquired about criminal records of top criminals operating in Dhaka and adjacent areas and also those of Arman, George and Mokhlesur.

The three were informed about 'crucial clues' which the government claimed to have got mainly from Arman and Mokhlesur.

A seven-member probe body comprising CID and Rab intelligence personnel was present at the meeting.

The Interpol and FBI men are yet to talk with Arman, now on remand and being quizzed by Rab-4, which arrested him from Dhanmondi on June 3.

Rab sources yesterday evening said the visitors did not ask for talking with Arman.

## Political, religious

**FROM PAGE 1**

Referring to the European human rights conference held in London on June 17, Avebury said, "The facts and figures presented at the conference show that Bangladesh has turned to be a dangerous land for opposition political parties and religious minorities."

BBC Bangla Service last night said Avebury had mentioned the August 21 grenade attack, the killing of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, the persecution on the Ahmadiyya community and the extra-judicial killings by Rapid Action Battalion.

"Although human rights organisations and international community repeatedly drew the attention of Bangladesh government, they (government) are acting in such a way as if nothing happened there," said BBC Bangla Service quoting Avebury.

He also told parliament that although the Bangladesh government has banned two Islamist organisations, it is not taking any action against the Khatme Nabuwat, which is spreading hatred and instigating against the Ahmadiyyas in Bangladesh.

Speaking in the House, Baroness Paula Uddin, the first member of Bangladesh origin in the House of Lords, also cited violation of human rights in Bangladesh.

But the Labour Party MP said Bangladesh has achieved success in different fields.

"Bangladesh government should not ignore the violation of human rights in the country," BBC quoted her as saying.

The Labour Party representative also urged the Bangladesh government to invite a British parliamentary team to observe the human rights situation in Bangladesh.

of Baghdad, killing one policeman and wounding seven civilians, police Brig. Gen. Sarhad Qadr said. Tuz Khormato is 88km south of the northern city of Kirkuk.

In all, at least 32 people were killed Wednesday across Iraq, including a prominent Sunni law professor assassinated by gunmen. Jassim al-Issawi was a former judge who put his name forward at one point to join the committee drafting Iraq's constitution. The assassination appeared aimed at intimidating Sunni Arabs willing to join Iraq's efforts to create a stable political system.

Al-Issawi's killing, potentially the most politically significant act of violence since Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari came to office nearly two months ago, marked the first direct attempt to scare moderates away from political participation.

It sent a powerful message to the Sunni Arab community to either boycott involvement in the fledgling government or risk death.

Insurgents bent on starting a civil war to overthrow Iraq's US-backed government have maintained nearly eight weeks of relentless attacks, killing more than 1,240 people since April 28, when al-Jaafari announced his Shia-dominated government.

Al-Issawi, thought to be 50, was shot dead with his son, according to Abdul-Sattar Jawad, editor-in-chief of al-Siyadah, a daily newspaper where the lawyer was a contributing editor.

## CEC not credible enough to hold fair election

Hamid says on Narsingdi by-polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid yesterday said "rigging" in the Narsingdi-1 by-election has proved that the present Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz is not credible enough to hold a free and fair election.

"He [CEC] has failed to hold a by-election fairly, how can he hold the next general election in a free and fair manner?" asked the senior Awami League leader at a press briefing at his parliament office.

Hamid said the Narsingdi by-poll was a test for the new CEC to prove his credibility when the mainstream opposition parties rejected his appointment. "But MA Aziz has failed miserably," he observed.

"Even the chief election commissioner has failed to provide security for the independent candidate during the polls," Hamid said.

Referring to a comment of Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain in parliament on Wednesday, Hamid said, "The minister spoke the truth to say that BNP has set Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) against the Awami League."

"BNP has let loose the Rab against Awami League ahead of the next general election as people already rejected the present government for its misrule and misdeeds," the deputy opposition leader said.

## Two muggers lynched in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mob lynched two unidentified muggers in Chawk Bazar in the city on Wednesday night.

The muggers arrived in front of Oli Khan Mosque in an auto-rickshaw and made an attempt to mug two rickshaw passengers at 10:30pm.

As the women in the rickshaw cried out for help, locals rushed to the scene and held the muggers, Kotwali police said.

The mob beat up the muggers until police rescued and sent them to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital where they died after an hour.

## Akhtaruzzaman

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desertion of the ruling party and the possibility of joining Awami League (AL).

Speculations have been rife for the last few days that he will soon join the main opposition.

When contacted last night, Akhtar told The Daily Star, "I am considering joining a grand alliance that the party has already initiated move for. I will join the alliance only if Awami League accepts the four conditions that I have given."

He however declined to disclose the conditions, and said he would make those public at today's press conference to be held at the Jatiya Press Club.

The former BNP lawmaker said he would take the final decision after having discussions with the AL leaders about his conditions. The talks were supposed to take place last night.

A top AL leader wishing anonymity yesterday said that two of Akhtar's demands are the charge of Kishoreganj district AL, and a position in the party's policy-making body.

## NARSINGDI BY-POLLS Defeated candidate asks CEC to quit

BDNEWS, Narsingdi

The defeated independent candidate Shahadat Hossain Munna has demanded cancellation of the results of Narsingdi-1 by-election and resignation of the

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).

He placed the demands at a press conference held at Narsingdi Press Club yesterday evening.

In a written statement, Munna said the supporters of the four-party alliance candidate threatened his supporters and ousted them from almost all the polling booths during the by-polls on Wednesday.

He alleged that the cadres of the ruling alliance candidate cast false votes with the help of presiding officers and law enforcers at the polling stations.

He said police arrested his driver Nader prior to the election. "I informed it to the local administration, but they did not pay attention to the matter. Rather, they played a key role to ensure the victory of the four-party alliance candidate in the by-polls," Munna said.

He also alleged that the activists of the four-party alliance candidate attacked the houses of his activists even after the by-polls.

"They also threatened my family members over my wife's mobile phone," he added.

He alleged that the ruling party activists attacked the house of his brother Shahajuddin at Comilla colony in the town, forcing him to take refuge at his ancestral home at Baushia.

Munna also alleged that the supporters of alliance candidate fired on his workers on Wednesday night at Sheba Sangha intersection, leaving many of them injured.

## FIRING EXERCISE

## Army to give Tk 50,000 to family of killed girl

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Army authorities will give Tk 50,000 to the family of a four-year-old girl who was killed during an army firing exercise in Savar Wednesday afternoon.

According to ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations), the authorities will pay the money to the victim's family as assistance.

Besides, a three-member committee has been formed to investigate the incident.

A bullet hit Aio, daughter of Mohammad Alam of Baipail, while she was playing at Basundhara playground at about 5.30pm.

She was rushed to local Halima Clinic and then shifted to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) where she died.

The army men were practising firing inside the Savar Cantonment, which is about one mile from the spot.

## AL celebrates

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1949 with a view to establishing a nation free of communalism and economic and political disparity.

But the dream has been shattered with the rise of anti-liberation forces in the government, the leaders said.

"The people are now living in utter misery, which needs an immediate change, and we're determined to bring the change by ousting the government," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told a rally yesterday.

Recalling the historical March 7 speech by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1971, he said, "We have to launch a new movement to build the country as dreamt by the father of the nation."

AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu said a conspiracy against the AL began with the assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975. The plot is still continuing and the killings of the AL leaders are not stray incidents, he added.

He expressed the hope they will be successful to build a democratic and non-communal nation through implementing the AL's development programmes.

"It's the Awami League that led the Liberation War, which witnessed a loss of three million lives. But the sacrifice of the martyrs is yet to reap its result," AL lawmaker Abdul Razzak, MP told the rally.

AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed said the victory in the Liberation War has become vulnerable today, as the law and order has seriously deteriorated with the government violating human rights.

"Let the pledge of the 56th founding anniversary of the Awami League be revival of democracy and human rights by ousting the autocratic and corrupt government," he added.

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## Power minister

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record criticising Iqbal's performance at a high-level meeting on the power sector. This prompted the state minister to reply to that through the press, shrugging off the blames.

According to sources, Iqbal's performance in the last three years as regards implementation of some power projects was affected by interference from the PMO.

Citing an instance, the sources mentioned that in early 2004 when the Siraganj 450 mw power project under the Power Development Board (PDB) reached the final stage of launch and the bid winner Summit power was finalising arrangement of \$186 million funds, the PMO cancelled the project on the pretext that this project should be supervised by the Power Cell, not the PDB.

The reason behind this was simply political -- the chief of Summit is the brother of an Awami League lawmaker, and the BNP government will not award a contract that will benefit the main opposition party directly or indirectly.

The Fenchuganj 90 mw power project that saw re-tendering five times in the last two years was also delayed because of interference from the PMO. The project has been recently awarded to a disqualified Chinese bidder.

PMO sources however say that tender process for the Fenchuganj project was repeatedly tampered with by the PDB, and the state minister should have addressed the issue from the beginning to avoid such re-tendering.

On the other hand, the state minister claims success in implementing the Siddhirganj 210 mw power project and the 100 mw Tongi project. "There was almost no external interference in these projects," an official said.

"It is not fair to judge his (Iqbal) performance as he could not act independently. Various lobbies and vested interest groups always resorted to higher authorities to

influence different tender procedures. And that happened most of the time in the last three years," he pointed out.

"It is the role of the PMO which is mainly responsible for poor performance of the energy ministry."

Another source said Iqbal came under tremendous pressure in recent times as powerful business lobbies are pushing ahead an unsolicited deal for the Meghnaghat phase three 450 mw power project.

The lobbies are also hammering on awarding the Meghnaghat-2 project to disqualified bidder Belhassa of the UAE along with Orion Power. Belhassa and Orion, blessed by the 'alternative source of power' in the government already bagged the massive Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover project.

While Iqbal is not resisting both these faulty deals, the government procedure itself requires that the interested parties obey some rules. This slowed down both the projects and made the powerful lobbies very unhappy.

The government, after nearly four years of rule, also realises that it did not do much in the power sector and that power crisis has become a major political issue, the sources noted.

Now the principal secretary's plan to add 430 mw power at a cost of Tk 1,200 crore in one year is getting top priority.

"But the fact is that the 430 megawatt mission is not a pragmatic one. The government will have to abide by its own rules. And these rules are major hindrances to speedy implementation of power projects," a top official of the energy ministry pointed out.

When contacted, Iqbal said, "Under the (principal secretary's) proposal, I shall do my part as fast as possible. But I cannot take the responsibility of the pace with which a project proceeds through the other ministries like the planning ministry or the finance ministry."

## Building research

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Jamilur Reza Chowdhury and assigned by the housing ministry in 1986, are still pending, he added.

The poor facilities are resulting in brain drain, an HBRI research said on condition of anonymity, describing that many skilled researchers have already left HBRI, which is severely hampering the consistency of the research works.

"It is enough that the researchers of the HBRI still continue different research works with so limited capacity," he mentioned.

The HBRI has to carry on its research activities with backdated equipment, which was collected in the 1970s, the researcher grieved.

"Although expected results have not come from the research works of HBRI in recent years, other activities like training on building construction and different building materials testing are going on well," he asserted.

Among other projects, HBRI researchers are presently trying to utilize dust materials produced by a stone mine in Dinajpur district. They have already initially succeeded in inventing a special type of brick by using the dust materials, but it will take more time to get the final result of the research work, researchers said.

## 2 JCD cadres killed

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Wednesday, and arrested Tapu and his accomplices Zahid, Rajib, Saiful, and Shahadat.

Tapu was accused in at least four murder cases including the one for slaying Dhaka City Corporation Commissioner Raju while Rajib in at least three cases for murder and robbery, said Rab press release.

The arrestees during interrogation disclosed that more firearms and ammunition were still left with Masud, Rana, and Naim at Rayer Bazar.

After the interrogation, Rab men raided Rayer Bazar area and arrested Masud and Rana.

The two confessed to having the arms hidden at Naim's house at Godghar in Rayer Bazar and took the Rab men there. The Rab team arrested Naim and recovered the AK-47 (7.62mm sub machine gun) and its 88 bullets, one pistol, one revolver, one airgun, 11 bullets and two hand-bombs.

Then the crime-busting men to nab the rest of the gang -Abul and Sohel--bulldozed Tapu into making a phone call to Abul and asked him to come to the capital.

Abul, who was holed up in Savar, refused to come to the city on security grounds. But when Tapu quoting Emon told him that they needed some firearms and ammunition by the morning, he gave the address of Khorshed.

Following the information, Rab men arrested Khorshed and recovered eight bullets from his possession.

**GUNFIGHT**  
Taking Tapu and Rajib with them, a Rab team went to Nirbilii at about

## Qatar minister

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Qatar tomorrow when top officials of the two countries meet in the capital.

A 17-member delegation led by Ahmad Bin Abdullah Al Mahmood, minister of state for foreign affairs of Qatar, arrives here today.

The meeting is a follow-up of top-level talks between Bangladesh and Qatar recently, official sources pointed out.

The two sides will also discuss expanding trade and commerce, Qatar investment in Bangladesh and technical cooperation in exploration of oil and gas.

According to the draft of (MoU), Bangladesh will allow additional three flights of Qatar Airlines a week, and Qatar will hire a large number of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers from Bangladesh.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, who visited Qatar this month, had earlier told journalists that Qatar authorities indicated hiring over 50,000 workers from Bangladesh.

Dhaka hopes that fresh employment in Qatar might go up several times following the signing of the MoU as it requires a huge number of workers for implementing its 10-year development programme.

The oil rich Qatar is implementing development programmes involving around \$10 billion a year. It is also carrying out huge infrastructure development for holding the next Asian Games. Over 50,000 Bangladeshis now work in Qatar and send home over \$120 million in remittance annually.

The Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani visited Bangladesh in April this year and indicated hiring a large number of workers if Bangladesh permits increased frequency of Qatar Airlines flight between Dhaka and Doha.

Bangladesh was not ready at that time to accept the offer considering the business loss of Biman Bangladesh Airlines on the route. Both Biman and Qatar Airlines operate two flights a week.

But Dhaka later agreed to allow more Qatar Airlines flight on the route, expecting a large-scale fresh employment of Bangladeshis workers there. Qatar was informed about the latest development during Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's visit to Doha in the first week of this month.

The delegation from Qatar is now coming to Dhaka to execute the decision.

The foreign ministry has already prepared a draft of the MoU and will place it at the meeting between the two sides, sources mentioned.

## 40 crocs

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reptiles will land at Zia International Airport at 11:00pm by an Al Italian flight.

The crocodiles, once a very common species in rivers across the country, are now on the verge of extinction. Now there are only four such freshwater carnivorous reptiles, three in Chittagong and Khulna zoos and one in Khan Jahan Ali Mazar in Bagerhat.

The Ministry of Environment and Forest has taken an initiative to reintroduce the reptiles in the country's natural habitat.

The freshwater crocodiles were available in the Padma, Meghna, Dhaleshwari and Karnaphuli rivers and in their tributaries about two decades ago.

"These reptiles play an important role in the water ecosystem and in the marine food chain."

Among the 40 crocodiles arriving tonight, 32 are females and eight are males. Twenty-nine of them will be sent to Dulahajara Safari Park in Cox's Bazar, six to Khan Jahan Ali Mazar and the rest to Dhaka Zoo.

Sources in the forest department said the main objective of the safari park is breeding, rehabilitation and preservation of rare and near-extinct wildlife in the country.

The forest ministry in 2003 took an initiative to this end and sought assistance from the Indian government for collecting freshwater crocodiles.

Three species of crocodiles now available in the subcontinent are sailwater crocodiles (*Crocodilus palustris*), freshwater crocodiles (*Crocodilus porosus*) and gharial crocodiles (*Gavialis gangeticus*).

There are 150 to 200 sailwater crocodiles in the Sundarbans and only a couple of gharials at Dhaka Zoo.

## BCL returns

**FROM PAGE 1**

The DU campus went through a series of violence after the death of Shammee Akhter Happy in a road accident on May 28.

Activists of JCD, the student wing of ruling BNP, on two counts had beat up the general students and workers of the opposition student organisations for demonstrating against police atrocities and calling for resignation of the VC and proctor.

BCL President Liaqat Sikder said, "This is our campus and we will come here whenever we wish, and none has the right to prevent us."

The organisation would stage demonstrations on the campus to press home their demands including resignation of the university proctor.

BCL acting general secretary Saifuzzaman Shekhor, Rafique Kotowal, Baloram Podder, Khan Moimul Islam Mustak, Istak Ahmed Shinnul, among others, accompanied the BCL activists.

On the other hand, leaders of other student organisations including Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal backed-BCL, Bangladesh Chhatra Maitri, Jatiya Chhatra Dhara, Chhatra Oikya also came to campus yesterday.

## Bidisha asked

**FROM PAGE 1**

force comprising officials of different intelligence agencies are continuing to interrogate Bidisha at the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH).

The task force interrogated Bidisha for about two hours yesterday morning mainly on the source of £16.10 lakh deposited in one of her bank accounts in London and her India visit, but could not glean any important information.

The interrogators asked Bidisha repeatedly about who she had met in India and the content of their discussions. She was also quizzed about her connection with a foreign intelligence agency and one Keramat Ali who deposited Tk 9 crore in one of her accounts.

"We have quizzed her but squeeze information on her bank accounts, source of money and her foreign connections, but we could not extract any important information," said one of the interrogators wishing anonymity.

Meanwhile, the High Court on Wednesday asked the government to present relevant information and documents on the money laundering case against Bidisha before the court on Saturday.

## Series of talks

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Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin, speaking at a press briefing on his arrival at the Zia International Airport, however, said, "The talks were held in a very positive and constructive manner and now both the sides can move forward to resolve differences and further enhance bilateral cooperation."

Hemayetuddin, who led the Bangladesh side in the June 21-22 foreign secretary level consultations, told reporters that his talks are not for immediate implementation but they facilitated the talks of various joint working groups, which will resolve differences through discussion.

In this context, he said a series of talks between the joint working groups and committees of home, commerce, communications, science and technology, agriculture etc will start within next couple of months to resolve issues as well as enhance cooperation between the two neighbouring countries.

The foreign secretary said both sides laid importance on exchange at all levels, especially high profile regular exchange visits at both political and official levels, and consensus has been reached on visits of parliament members of the two countries.

"We are hoping that Indian commerce and water resources ministers will visit Bangladesh soon to hold talks with their counterparts for resolving issues," he said, adding, "some trade related agreements will also take place soon."

Our New Delhi correspondent adds: Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin yesterday said his country could examine the idea of exploration of its natural gas jointly with India and said there was no mindset in Dhaka that relations with New Delhi should not improve.

"India is central to Bangladesh's foreign policy," he said, adding that the visits by Foreign Minister Morshed Khan and Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman to India "demonstrated how committed we are to developing relations with India