

AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK

# Hopes die with son's death



Morsheda, accompanied by her husband Motalab Mridha, holds the photo of their son Mamun, who was killed in August 21 grenade attacks on an Awami League rally last year.

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, from Patuakhali

With the loss of their only son and the eldest child, Mamun, to the August 21 grenade carnage last year, the Mridhas of Alipura village also have lost all their future hopes.

Gone with the winds was their zeal to live, to eke out a living. Motalab Mridha, a landless farmer turned sawmill worker, and his wife Morsheda are now too frustrated to fight through any longer the drudgeries of poverty to ensure a better life for their remaining children.

Mamun Mridha, a first-year higher secondary school student of Kabi Nazrul Islam Government College, was one of the 22 people killed in the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally that also injured over 100 others in 2004. He lived with his father at Nayabazar in Old Dhaka, where Motalab worked at a sawmill.

"I forbade him not to join any procession or meeting of any political party, but he didn't listen to me," grieved Morsheda, sitting beside her husband at their

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## No dialogue with bombers, says Hasina

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina has outright rejected any possibility of dialogue with the government, saying that her party cannot sit with the "bombers and killers" who have jeopardised the country's security.

"Discussion with whom? With the killer government that unleashed the bomb attacks across the country simultaneously?" she questioned while giving an exclusive interview with the BDNEWS at her Sudha Sadan residence yesterday evening.

Hasina squarely blamed the government for the countrywide bomb attacks and said the BNP-Jamaat alliance, using the state machinery, unleashed the attacks to bar her party from coming to power in the next general elections.

"How live bomb was found inside Rab training school? It can't be that intelligence agency will know nothing if the government itself is not involved in the bombardments. Were they in deep sleep?" said Hasina, also the Awami League president.

Hasina said it is clear that the country's security is at stake at the hands of Khaleda Zia who is also in charge of the home and defence

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# Rockets fired at US ship in Aqaba

## Jordanian soldier killed

AFP, Aqaba

A Jordanian soldier was killed yesterday when unidentified attackers fired three rockets near US warships moored in the Red Sea port of Aqaba and into a neighbouring Israeli resort.

The US military confirmed the attacks but said there had been no American casualties.

A total of three Katyusha rockets were fired from a warehouse in Aqaba, landing in the port, a site close to a military hospital and next to the airport in the nearby Israeli resort of Eilat, Jordan said.

"The two US Marine ships docked at the port of Aqaba were not hit," Interior Minister Awni Yervas said. "An investigation is underway to determine the cause of the explosions."

There was no indication over who might have been behind the strikes, which come in the midst of Israel's historic pullout from the Gaza Strip, its first ever withdrawal from Palestinian territory.

One soldier was hit at the dock-

side in Aqaba and taken to hospital where he died of his wounds, a security source said. Another was injured.

A statement from the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain said the rocket flew over the USS Ashland and USS Kearsarge which were moored in the port and exploded in a warehouse on the nearby pier.

"The warehouse sustained an approximate eight-foot hole in the roof of the building. No sailors or Marines were injured in this attack," it said.

Lieutenant Commander Charly Brown later told AFP that both the USS Ashland and USS Kearsarge -- the only US ships in Aqaba at the time -- left the port immediately following the attack.

Earlier this month, Israel warned its citizens to steer clear of Jordan, saying there had been an increase in the threat of attacks against tourists.

The Israeli navy was put on a high state of alert after the attack on their side of the border, which destroyed a car near the airport in

Eilat.

"On the Israeli side one or two (Katyushas) fell on the airport area, without causing any victims," said Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz.

"I have telephoned the advisor of King Abdullah II with a view to co-ordinating efforts to prevent such actions," he said.

"There have been attempts in the past, including in Eilat, by terrorists to infiltrate and carry out attacks, stemming from Jordan and Egypt," he said.

The Katyusha-style weapon is usually used by Shiite fundamentalist movement Hezbollah, which was instrumental in ejecting Israeli troops from south Lebanon in 2000.

The Jordanian statement said the depot where the rockets had been stored had been let out to a group of four Egyptians and Iraqis just a few days ago.

US warships have been targeted in the past. In October 2000, 17 US sailors were killed when two suicide

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## Developments in Bangladesh worrisome, says Pranaab

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee yesterday termed the large-scale terrorist violence in Bangladesh 'worrisome'.

"Developments in Bangladesh are worrisome and the rise in terrorist activities in a neighbouring country has its impact on India too," Mukherjee told reporters in Kolkata, PTI reported.

He said, "Though we are deeply concerned at the developments, we cannot do much about it as we cannot interfere in the affairs of a sovereign state."

"We have expressed our concern to the government of Bangladesh and we hope that the Bangladesh government will be in a position to keep the situation under control," Mukherjee said.

The minister agreed with West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharjee's observation that terrorist activities were on the rise in Bangladesh.

## BRAZILIAN SHOOTING London police chief says he won't quit

AFP, London

The head of London's Metropolitan Police, Ian Blair, said yesterday he has no intention of resigning over last month's police shooting of a Brazilian wrongly suspected of being a suicide bomber.

"No, not at all," said Blair when asked in a BBC interview to be aired later Friday whether he might stand down in the face of furore over the killing of Jean Charles de Menezes.

"Obviously, one has to reflect on people's views, but the level of support that the Met and I have received over the last few weeks I think outweighs these particular events."

De Menezes was shot and killed by armed officers in a south London subway station on July 22, a day after a failed attempt to repeat the July 7 bombings that killed 56 people, including four apparent Islamist suicide bombers.

Blair, the most senior police officer in Britain, said at the time that the electrician was shot as part of an anti-terrorist operation after he "refused to obey police instructions".

Documents leaked this week revealed that in fact, De Menezes did not flee police by leaping a ticket barrier at Stockwell station, nor was he wearing a heavy coat that could have concealed a bomb, as earlier reported.

It also emerged that he had already been restrained by a police officer when he was shot seven times in the head and once in the shoulder in front of a carriage full of horrified commuters.

De Menezes' family on Friday reiterated its call for Blair to resign,

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## WEDNESDAY'S BOMB BLASTS

# Stunned mother can't justify Salam's death

EMRAN HOSSAIN EMON, JU Correspondent

The death of her 9-year old son Abdus Salam in one of the Wednesday's serial time-bomb blasts has shocked Farida Khatun into insanity. Since then, she has been ceaselessly asking aloud how the killing of my innocent boy in the name of establishing a rule of Islam?" she wailed and then fainted at her Sabujbag home in Savar yesterday.

"O Allah, what was the fault of my baby? To whom should I turn to for justice but you? How do you justify the killing of my innocent boy in the name of establishing a rule of Islam?" she wailed and then fainted at her Sabujbag home in Savar yesterday.

Salam was the youngest of two sisters and three brothers. Poverty forced the family to move to Savar from Joypur under Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj several months ago.

"We had been doing everything we could to make a real man out of Salam, as our other children missed schooling due to lack of money. How will we live now with our youngest child lying alone in the graveyard?" said Ramjan Ali, a fruit and vegetable vendor, with a blank look in his eyes.

Like every other day, Abdus Salam, a Class II student of Savar-1 Government Primary School, returned home after classes at 1:00pm Wednesday. He had his lunch and after about an hour went



out with a lunch-pack for his elder brother Kamal, who sells fruits on a footpath at Savar bus stand.

Coming out of their rented house, he saw a parcel wrapped with red scotch tape lying in front. He pointed it out to his playmate, Anik. They took it to be a packet of sweets or a toy. As Salam picked it up, the bomb went off with a loud bang, leaving the two critically injured.

Salam passed away from the injuries at 5:15pm the same day at Enam Medical College and Hospital. Anik is still undergoing treatment there.

"Had he not come out to bring me lunch, he would not have been killed," said a dejected Kamal, adding, "We heard the bomb was set by some huzurs [Muslim clergyman]. But I cannot understand what type of Muslims can commit such a malevolent crime."

## Musharraf hopes to join Saarc summit as scheduled

Bss, Islamabad

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf yesterday conveyed his condolences and sympathies for the victims of the August 17 bomb blasts in Bangladesh and expressed his strong condemnation against the perpetrators of such dastardly act.

He said Pakistan was looking forward to its participation in the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka and expressed his full confidence in Bangladesh's ability to hold the summit on the scheduled dates.

President Musharraf expressed this sentiment when Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin, now in Islamabad to attend the Bangladesh-Pakistan foreign secretary level annual consultations, called on him at his office.

The Bangladesh foreign secretary conveyed the greetings and good wishes of the president and the prime minister of Bangladesh to the Pakistan president.

President Musharraf expressed the hope that the Bangladesh prime minister's visit to Pakistan would take place at the earliest.

He assured Hemayetuddin that the Pakistan government was fully committed to further strengthening the relations between the two brotherly countries through widening cooperation to their fullest potentials.

Earlier, Hemayetuddin called on Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri and discussed various ways and means to enhance cooperation between the two countries.

## Kala Jahangir's aide killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A wanted criminal was killed in a 'shootout' between Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices at Tongi in the early hours yesterday.

The criminal, Panu Howladar alias Kanu alias Russell, 24, was a close accomplice of Kala Jahangir, one of the 23 top criminals in the city, and notorious criminal Taj, a Rab press release said.

Rab-4 nabbed Panu, accused in 13 cases filed with Kafrul Police Station for murder, extortion and rape, and his accomplice Shah Alam from Kamarpara under Turag Police Station at about 2:00am on July 27. They were handed over to Kafrul police the following day and Rab-4 took charge of quizzing them in an arms case.

Panu told Rab that his accomplices Tuhin, Razzak, Haji Shah Alam have huge arms in their possession. They have a hideout near Biswa Ijerna ground where they take liquor, marijuana and phensidyl and plan criminal activities.

Acting on his statement, a Rab team rushed to raid the hideout at about 3:00am yesterday but Panu's accomplices attacked the team near the spot and Rab then opened fire in

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PHOTO: STAR

Police yesterday arrest seven activists of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen in Shaghata and Sunderganj upazilas in connection with the Wednesday's serial bomb blasts.

# Only 2pc launches use weather forecast device

## Owners risk passengers' lives to save Tk 10,000

ASHIQUIR RAHMAN

Most launches plying on inland waterways do not use weather forecasting machines to detect tornadoes and nor'westers, a frequent cause of launch disasters every year, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) source said.

At best only two percent launches on inland waterways may be using aneroid barometers or hygrometers for detecting possible tornadoes and nor'westers. Although the shipping ministry asked launch owners to install these

important weather instruments about one and a half years ago, the launch owners have only shown indifference to the matter, the BIWTA officials alleged.

"The launches on inland waterways often experience terrible accidents, falling into tornadoes or nor'westers because of not using aneroid barometers or hygrometers, while the cost of installing these instruments is between Tk 3,000 to 10,000 only," Emdadul Haque, joint director (Marine) of BIWTA Conservancy and Pilotage Department, said.

Most of the coastal vessels in the

country can easily save themselves from tornadoes and nor'westers by using these weather instruments, he mentioned.

Using an aneroid barometer and hygrometer, a launch master can determine abnormality in the humidity and air pressure half an hour before a tornado or nor'wester strikes, Emdad explained adding that once the whole system is presented to a launch master, he can easily understand the readings of the machines.

"Sensing the abnormality in the weather, the master then gets an

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# Ring road to rescue Ctg city from traffic tailback

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Chittagong is set to have an outer ring road linking Dhaka-Chittagong Trunk Road with Arakan Sarak (Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Highway) bypassing the city centre.

Urban planners, engineers and other experts believe that the Tk 120 crore project, implemented by the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) in three phases and financed by the government, will not only ease traffic congestion in the city but also help develop new townships with necessary civic amenities.

The ring road will divert all vehicles from Dhaka and other parts of the country bound for the three hill districts--Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban, towards south Chittagong and Cox's Bazar, they said. At present, the entire traffic has

to move via Chittagong city centre, causing severe congestion.

In the first phase, the CDA is constructing the Dhaka-Chittagong Bayezid Bostami Link Road on the northern fringe of the city. The 6-km long and 120-foot wide road will directly connect the Dhaka-Chittagong Trunk Road in the west with the Bayezid Bostami Road in the east, helping transportation of goods as well as passengers to and from the Nasirabad industrial area, north Chittagong and Rangamati and Khagrachhari.

"Seventy-five percent of this link road involving Tk 33 crore is already completed while the construction of the rest, including a bridge over Dhaka-Chittagong rail tracks, is going on," said CDA Chief Engineer Shah Mohammad Akhteruddin.

With most of the roads running

over government khas land, some 22 acres of land had to be acquired for Tk 14 crore for the ring road project.

Having started in late 2003, the CDA expects to complete the construction of the link road within 2006, the CDA official said.

In the second phase of the project, the CDA will build 6 km of an outer ring road, stretching from the city's Oxygen area to Quaiash under Hathazari upazila in the district.

Land worth Tk 15 crore has already been acquired for the road while its construction worth Tk 22 crore will start soon, sources said.

The Oxygen-Quaiash Road will help heavy vehicles bypass the city and reach Kalurghat industrial area in the city and Kapitai, Razoon and Rangunia in the district, said the CDA officials.

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## Arrest of AL men ordered, then revoked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government in a prompt decision ordered the district SPs (superintendent of police) to nab activists of Awami League (AL) and its wings after the Wednesday's countrywide blasts, but changed the decision shortly afterwards.

The Special Branch (SB) of police, following a decision of the government policy makers, started sending messages to the SPs into an hour of the blasts instructing them to this effect.

"The SB made a phone call to me at 12:30pm and instructed to arrest the opposition activists from wherever they could be found under my jurisdiction," an SP told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

"The office of DIG [deputy inspector general] of police also confirmed the government order and ordered to act without any delay," he added.

Several other SPs also admitted to The Daily Star of their receiving the messages.

The government later sent a cancellation order of the earlier message and instructed not to arrest anyone without any evidence.

The SPs, however, could not say the reason behind the cancellation order.

Wednesday's countrywide bomb blasts left two killed and more than a hundred injured.

## College student injured in attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified assailants chopped indiscriminately a college student, leaving him injured near Rampura Overbridge in the capital yesterday.

The victim, M Manik, 20, lives in Mirbagh of Maghbazar and is a second-year student of Khilgaon Model College.

His brother-in-law Sarwar Hossain told The Daily Star that Manik got out of home at 1:00pm to go to his uncle's house in Tongi. But

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Prayer Timing		
August 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-38	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

