

700 die in Iraq stampede

Suicide bomb panic causes the disaster over a bridge; 100 bodies recovered; others washed away in Tigris river

REUTERS, Baghdad

Nearly 700 Iraqi Shias died in a stampede over a Tigris river bridge provoked by rumours of a suicide bomber yesterday, and an official said the death toll was expected to reach 1,000.

The swarming crowds had been heading to a religious ceremony at the Kadhimiyah mosque in the old district of north Baghdad when someone shouted there was a suicide bomber among them, a police source said.

Most victims were women and children who "died by drowning or

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Iraqis walk over shoes lost during a stampede on a bridge in Baghdad yesterday. More than 700 people were killed in the stampede as thousands of Shia faithful gathered near a sacred shrine.



PHOTO: AFP

SERIAL BLASTS

Galib's nephew, 8 other suspects held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested President of Chittagong unit of Ahle Hadith Andolok Bangladesh (Ahab) Sadru Alam, a nephew of Asadullah Al Galib, along with eight other suspects of August 17 serial bomb blasts from different parts of the country in the last 24 hours ending

at 6:00pm yesterday. Police arrested Sadru, 50, a foreman of state-run TSP fertiliser factory in Chittagong, from his office on the bank of the river Karnaphuli at around 11:00pm on Tuesday following information given by Abdus Sattar Mollah, a guard of Ahle Hadith Jame Masjid

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Probe into finances of Islamic NGOs begins

Close watch on madrasas ordered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is investigating financial transactions of major Islamic non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as intelligence agencies suspect they provide financial support to Islamist militants in the country.

These NGOs fund militancy in the name of building mosques,

setting up madrasas, other educational institutions, hospitals and healthcare centres. They also gave financial backing to the zealots involved in the recent countrywide bomb blasts, sources said.

The local administrations have been asked to closely watch and report to the higher authorities the activities of madrasas set up by the

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AL terms HC verdict historic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League has termed the High Court verdict declaring martial law illegal 'historic' that according to them would uphold the constitution, democracy and rule of law.

The AL central leaders at a press conference at the party's Dhammendi office yesterday also slammed Law Minister Moudud Ahmed for his statement in this regard.

They demanded withdrawal of Moudud's statement, which according to them is an act of contempt of court, through making apology to the nation.

"This historic verdict appreciated by the nation has brought new

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FIFTH AMENDMENT ILLEGAL SC stays verdict for 2 more months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday extended for two months more the stay on Monday's historic High Court (HC) verdict that declared the fifth amendment to the constitution illegal as the rules from August 15, 1975 to April 9, 1979 were unlawful.

Headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, the full bench of SC Appellate Division passed the

order in a crowded courtroom after hearing both the sides.

The Appellate Division also directed the government to file a regular appeal petition.

After Monday's HC verdict, at midnight the Attorney General (AG) AJ Mohammad Ali went to the residence of Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Amirul Kabir Chowdhury, who stayed the judgement till yesterday.

The verdict came in response to a petition that claimed the ownership of the property of Moon Cinema Hall at Waizhat in Dhaka which was abandoned by the martial law. The government in 1972 also handed it over to the Muktijoddha Kalyan Trust.

As hearing on the government's appeal to stay the HC verdict began yesterday morning, AG Mohammad

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Call for unity to fight terrorism

Two-day convention ends with 8-point Dhaka Declaration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day anti-terrorism convention in the capital ended yesterday with Dhaka Declaration calling for unity of all progressive and democratic forces to build a corruption and terrorism-free Bangladesh.

The eight-point declaration also stressed an end to abuse of religion for communal and political pur-

poses.

Convenor of the convention Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud read out the declaration at the conclusion of the session held at the Institution of Engineers.

The convention had six sessions on different issues including rise of militants, state terrorism and rule of law, repression on women, freedom

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Govt moves on to offload all SOEs

Sets timeline for floating shares

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major move towards perking up the capital market as well as to scale down an increasing pressure on the country's coffers, the government yesterday initiated a process to offload a major chunk of its stakes in all the state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

A high-profile inter-ministerial meeting with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair directed

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