

# The Daily Star

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People's Right to Know

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## Mufti talks of more backing

### Says several ministers promised to save him from case for attempting to kill Hasina

STAR REPORT

Mufti Abdul Hannan yesterday told a court that the law enforcers were not supposed to arrest him as some influential ministers of the government had assured him that he would be exempted from the charge of attempting to kill Sheikh Hasina.

"Soon after the coalition had assumed power, I submitted a mercy petition to the prime minister, home minister and some other ministers and in reply they assured me that they will let me off the hook," Hannan told the court in presence of a large number of lawyers, law enforcers, and newsmen.

He said the cases filed against him including the one for an attempt to assassinate Hasina are politically motivated. They had been filed with

Kotalipara Police Station.

Hannan, arrested on Saturday in the capital's Maddhya Badda, also told the court that he is a supporter of the four-party alliance.

Clad in a lungi and a bullet-proof vest, Hannan was placed before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at about 5:30pm amid tight security. Tejgaon police successfully petitioned the court for him to be taken on a 10-day remand.

He said, "When the Rab men arrested me I was told that I have been arrested in Kotalipara cases, but I was shown arrested in one of the August 17 blasts cases."

He said excepting he and his brother names of all other accused

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PHOTO: STAR

Police take militant kingpin Mufti Hannan to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court, Dhaka, yesterday.

## Altaf denies links with Mufti Hannan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Arrested militant kingpin Mufti Hannan's claim before media that the then home minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury, now commerce minister, assured him of 'no fear' to live in the country has irked the government.

The former home minister's alleged links to Hannan, operation commander of Bangladesh chapter of the international Islamist militant organisation Harkatul Jihad (Huji), was talk of the town as well as an issue of daylong chat at government offices yesterday.

Sources said the home ministry yesterday enquired whether the militant leader at all made such a claim to newsmen on Saturday and what he exactly said.

Altaf however denied knowing Hannan or advising him to submit a mercy petition to get his name

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## 2 die in Satkhira bomb attack

### Bomb exploded in B'baria, leaflets found

STAR REPORT

Unidentified criminals carried out bomb attacks yesterday in Satkhira and Brahmanbaria that left two people dead.

Two people were killed and three others critically wounded when some criminals threw five bombs on a fish depot at Daliya market in Tala upazila in Satkhira district, reports our correspondent.

Robin Mandol, 50, son of Haripada Mandol of Tikarpur upazila, died on the spot while Jaigir Sarder, 40, succumbed to his injuries on way to Satkhira Sadar Hospital.

The injured are Noor Mohammad

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## BDR chief's comment makes Hasina worried

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina expressed her deep concern over defence and security of the country following Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Director General Maj Gen Jahangir Alam Chowdhury's comments.

"Has the government made Bangladesh a subservient state of India or sold the country to India? Indians can intrude into Bangladesh, carry out bomb blasts across the country and get a safe passage back?" she posed the questions.

"The independence and sovereignty of the country is now at stake," she said while talking to newsmen at Zia International Airport returning from India after a five-day visit.

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## PHULBARI OPEN PIT COAL MINE

### Asia Energy submits report on \$2b project

#### Gets environmental clearance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asia Energy Corporation yesterday submitted to the government its feasibility study along with a plan to develop a \$2 billion open-pit coal mine at Phulbari in Dinajpur from next year.

Development of this mine would require the company to relocate 40,000 people of 9,000 households in the mining area in different phases over a 30-year lifespan of the mine. The

company will compensate the affected people.

At the same time, the 6,500 hectare mine is expected to stimulate economic activities, particularly in transport sector, railway, land and sea ports and infrastructure building in the western and northern Bangladesh. The mine will directly create 10,000 jobs.

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## Protest rages on against open pit mining plan

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A section of people of Phulbari in Dinajpur under the banner of Phulbari Rakha Committee is opposing the open pit mining method proposed by Asia Energy for Phulbari coal mining project and cleared by the Department of Environment last month.

They are also protesting possible eviction of 40,000 to 50,000 people from the proposed 6,500-hectare coal mining site.

Leaders and members of the committee are organising demonstrations, processions and rallies at

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## Indian press twisted BDR DG's comment

### Says foreign ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday said the remarks made by the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Director General (DG) Maj Gen Jahangir Alam Chowdhury on Indian criminals' involvement with the August 17 bomb blasts were "distorted" by a section of Indian press.

"What he [BDR DG] said to the press in India was officially recorded in BDR-BSF [Border Security Force] Director General level meeting as: Some Indian criminals might have been involved in

the August 17 serial bomb blasts," a foreign ministry spokesperson told newsmen.

Indian citizen Giasuddin of North 24 Pargana of West Bengal district was arrested in Satkhira for his suspected links to the blasts, the spokesman said, adding, "Indian authorities also arrested his [Giasuddin] younger brother from his North 24 Pargana village home."

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs' statement that India was

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PHOTO: STAR

Violating traffic rules on the first day of the traffic month yesterday, a rickshaw van laden with vegetables and spices crosses the Saarc fountain on the VIP road near Sonargaon hotel, which is off-limits to all non-motorised vehicles from 8:00am to 10:00pm.