

# US diplomat killed in Karachi car bomb

4 others also hurt in blast outside consulate; Bush not cancelling trip plan

AFP, Karachi

A suicide car bomber rammed a diplomatic vehicle outside the US consulate in Karachi yesterday, killing an American diplomat and four other people, but President George W. Bush vowed that "terrorists and killers" would not stop him visiting Pakistan.

The attack came less than two days before Bush is scheduled to make a high-security trip to Pakistan, a key ally in the US-led "war on terror", although he was due to go to the capital Islamabad and not to Karachi.

Bush himself announced that a US diplomat had died in the blast at a news conference in New Delhi, where he is on the second leg of a South Asian tour that has also taken in Afghanistan.

"I have been briefed on the bombings and we have lost at least one US citizen in the bombings -- a foreign service officer," Bush said following talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

"Terrorists and killers are not going to prevent me from going to Pakistan," he added.

The explosion ripped through the car park of the nearby five-star

Marriott Hotel in the southern city's highest security zone, destroying at least 10 cars, damaging others, including some from the US mission, and smashing windows.

A Pakistani security official told AFP on condition of anonymity that a 4x4 vehicle belonging to the US consulate "was apparently hit by a suicide car bomber, blowing it into the air".

"The car flew through the air and fell on the other side of a seven-foot high (two-metre) wall. One diplomat was killed and two other

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

## AUG 17 BLASTS Supplementary charge sheets placed against top JMB men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Five supplementary charge sheets were submitted here in a court yesterday in connection with the August 17 blasts in Satkhira accusing 19 people.

On October 10 last year, the investigation officer (IO) of five cases CID ASP Munshi Atique submitted five separate charge sheets under the Explosive Substances Act with the court accusing 17 people including JMB chief Shaekh Abdur Rahman, JMB chief Bangla Bhai and military commander of JMB, Ataur Rahman Sunny.

But the court did not accept the charge sheets, saying that those excluded the actual names and

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

# India, US seal nuke cooperation pact

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India and the United States yesterday created history by reaching an understanding to implement a nuclear technology cooperation deal that would end decades of isolation for the South Asian country in the atomic arena.

Addressing a joint press conference with Bush after an hour-long talks at the Hyderabad House here, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said "we have reached a mutually satisfactory understanding to carry forward the July 18 (last year) agreement signed by President Bush and me on nuclear cooperation".

Bush declared that "we have reached a historic agreement on nuclear technology cooperation"

and made a dour three-point defence of the deal with India contending it was in the economic interest of US to help India develop nuclear power programmes.

The agreement envisages preparation of a plan to separate India's civilian nuclear facilities from military ones in return for US securing approval of the Congress and the 44-nation Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) for supplying nuclear fuel and reactors to India.

That would end decades of nuclear isolation for India, which was placed under international sanctions after conducting nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998.

"That plan has been successfully completed," Singh said and added that President Bush would now have to obtain the approval of the

US Congress and NSG and India will have to approach the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for India-specific inspection and safeguards of its civilian nuclear facilities.

Bush acknowledged that the deal was not easy either for him or the Indian prime minister but asserted "it is a necessary agreement which will help both the countries."

The deal, which would give India access to US nuclear technology to meet its soaring energy needs, has been opposed by some members of the US Congress because India has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Asked by a reporter how he will

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

## Militant kingpin faces 150 cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more cases were filed yesterday against militant kingpin Abdur Rahman, bringing the number of cases in connection with militancy to 225 since the serial blasts on August 17 last year.

Rahman was taken on a 10-day remand in the two cases filed with Kotwali Police Station in Sylhet under the Arms and Explosives acts.

Earlier, 223 cases were filed in connection with militancy and bomb attacks across the country, Home Secretary Safar Raj Hossain told reporters yesterday.

Rahman has been accused in at least 150 of these cases.

Police filed 154 cases for the August 17 blasts and 69 more were added later for bomb attacks, he added.

As many as 915 were arrested so far in the cases, Inspector General of Police yesterday told the press.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Rescuers who took part in the 119-hour rescue operation at the Phoenix building site in Tejgaon bid farewell to each other wrapping up their work yesterday.

## Hearing on charge framing against Sunny, others deferred again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Ataur Rahman Sunny, military commander of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), and six others could not be produced before a Dhaka court yesterday for charge framing in two cases due to hartal.

Shawkat Ali, a member of the parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry, made the demand.

"The committee chairman and a ruling BNP lawmaker denied holding any discussion on the issue. Their denial proves there is lack of transparency in the process," Shawkat alleged.

Committee Chairman and ruling BNP lawmaker Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star they are not against discussion. "I assured the opposition lawmakers that the discussion may be held at any meeting in future."

Replying to the AL lawmakers' query, the chief of air force however told the meeting the process is underway to purchase the aircraft. He would inform the committee in detail at any meeting in future, he said.

An agreement was signed in 2004-05 fiscal year for purchasing the fighters at \$5.85 million each.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

# AL MPs demand talks on fighter purchase

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers of the main opposition Awami League at a parliamentary body meeting yesterday demanded discussion on the purchase of 16 fighters from China at \$93.6 million, sensing lack of transparency in the process.

Shawkat Ali, a member of the parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry, had instituted a suit in the High Court against the purchase.

The allegations made were: The aircraft were old and hence there had been a misuse of public funds, an advance payment had been made in violation of the terms of the agreement, and the purchase process lacked transparency.

Following the suit, the HC issued a rule nisi on the government and asked it to explain why the purchase agreement would not be declared illegal. Later, it decided that the parliamentary committee should not be prevented from examining the issue and the rule was vacated.

The parliamentary body at yesterday's meeting also expressed satisfaction over the arrest of JMB kingpin Abdur Rahman. It also discussed the appointment of civil manpower in the defence services.

## Bomb-making materials seized from another house in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered huge quantities of bomb-making material raiding a house in the city's Shibganj area yesterday.

The raid was conducted within hours of Abdur Rahman's surrender and Hanif's confessional statement. Hanif was arrested along with Rahman.

A Rab official quoting Hanif said one of their accomplice Saiful Islam alias Saifur Rahman had been staying at Shibganj area where some bomb-making materials are kept.

A Rab team broke into the house at Shibganj around 11:00am and recovered seven packets of resistance wire, 1000 pressure switch, 1000 capacitors, 600 integrated

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

# I always believed they would rescue me

Says Nikhil on his miraculous return to life

MORSHED ALI KHAN

"I survived because I always believed they would rescue me," said a frail looking Nikhil, 18, lying at the Intensive Care Unit of the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) yesterday. Nikhil, who hails from Patuakhali, was miraculously pulled out of the debris of multi-storey Phoenix building alive at 11:20pm on Wednesday.

Nikhil was trapped on the ground floor in a pocket of the collapsed building for 108 hours with his badly injured left hand stuck between two steel frames.

Within two hours of his rescue doctors at the CMH had to amputate his hand from the elbow.

For the rescuers it was a joy they took home on the very last day of the 119-hour-long relentless rescue operation involving hundreds of men and machines from nine different organisations.

Rescuers from the engineering battalion of the army said they were already aware of Nikhil being there when his brother-cum and co-worker told them about his position. After they made holes in the concrete slabs they looked down through the opening and

suddenly Nikhil faintly spoke out, "Sir, I can see you."

The three rescuers from the army and the fire brigade reached him through a two feet high opening, manually removing piles of debris. They used a hydraulic steel cutter to free his hand from the steel frames. A stretcher had to be sent down to bring him out.

Brigadier Nizam Ahmed, heading the rescue operation, said the first thing Nikhil said

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

## TEJGAON BUILDING COLLAPSE

### Rescue operation wrapped up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rescue operation at the collapsed Phoenix building in Tejgaon was officially over since 10:00am yesterday after hundreds of men and machines from nine different organisations removed up to 2,500 truckloads of debris since Saturday last. The rescuers recovered 21 bodies and rescued dozens of trapped workers from the rubble.

Shaheed Tajuddin Road was opened to public just after midday yesterday bringing relief to the citywide heavy traffic that engulfed the city after the closure of the road.

According to officials, the building was undergoing extensive modification work at the time of its collapse. The owner of Phoenix building started changing its "use pattern" from a factory into a 500-bed hospital without any approval

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

# Ministries seek approval for purchases flouting PPR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different ministries are now looking for the cabinet's clearance for purchases that violate the Public Procurement Regulation (PPR) 2003 when a new law on public procurement to replace the regulation is awaiting passage by parliament.

The ministries yesterday submitted seven purchase proposals at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman. Of these, six violate PPR provisions and need the cabinet's nod for legitimisation.

The cabinet committee approved four of these. Three of the proposals came from Bangladesh Chemical

Industries Corporation (BCIC) under the industries ministry which is already involved in the purchase of fertiliser violating the rules.

The BCIC last year purchased three lakh tonnes of urea fertiliser in three instalments --all violating the PPR's article 33, which stipulates a competitive bidding and purchase on the basis of unsolicited negotiations.

The other approved proposal came from the food ministry, which sought relaxation and exemption of PPR's clauses 33 and 41(c) to import food by payment in hard cash to face emergency.

The committee however shelved a proposal to purchase two lakh tonnes of sugar violating PPR's article 41(c). When asked by report-

ers after the meeting, Saifur Rahman explained: "We have asked the commerce ministry to float a tender first to determine the price of sugar. Then we may consider relaxing the PPR."

The energy ministry sought a proposal to procure 60,000 tonnes of diesel bypassing clause 41(c) of the PPR. However as neither the energy adviser nor the energy secretary was present at the meeting, the committee declined to approve it.

Due to the absence of the energy ministry chief, the committee also did not discuss another proposal seeking government grant or subsidy worth Tk 6,795 crore for the

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

## Top outlaw dies in 'shootout' with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

A top leader of the Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) was killed during a 'shootout' between his accomplices and police in Jhenidah early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Nurul Islam alias Nuru alias Rocky, 45, of village Kashimnagar in Jhenidah sadar. Police arrested him at Baka village of Jibonnagar upazila of Chuadanga Wednesday noon and took him to the police station for interrogation.

Following leads extracted from him, police took Nurul Islam to Shuti-Durgapur village in the same upazila at about 3:45am yesterday to recover illegal arms. As they

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

Prayer Timing		
March 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-45
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-07	6-11
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation