

Algerian attack aimed at president kills 22

AFP, Algiers

A suicide bomber killed 22 people and injured 107 in an assassination bid against President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in northeastern Algeria, state radio said yesterday.

Bouteflika appeared on television soon after Thursday's bomb attack near a mosque in the city of Batna to denounce the "criminals" and vow to pursue his national reconciliation policy.

National television had earlier put the death toll at 15, with 74 wounded in the latest bomb attack in the north African nation, which is still recovering from a civil war in the 1990s that left more than 150,000 dead.

The explosion killed and injured people in a crowd awaiting a visit by the president in the centre of Batna and witnesses quoted by the television said the bomb was hidden in a plastic bag.

The attacker was discovered by the crowd and triggered the blast before the presidential cortège arrived in that part of the city. Authorities did not identify the killer or say whether he was among the dead.

It was the closest that a suicide bomber has come to the president, who on Friday planned to attend the funeral of victims and go on touring the Batna region, rather than returning to Algiers as planned.

Bouteflika wanted to show "solidarity with the victims of the attack," Interior Minister Yazid Zerhouni said.

The president's reconciliation policy is intended socially to integrate Islamic activists who renounce violence that turned into an all-out war in the years after the army intervened in 1992 to cancel elections a fundamentalist party was poised to win.

But this year has seen three attacks claimed by al-Qaeda's self-

2 of a firm at Ctg port held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Joint forces arrested two people including the owner of a freight-forwarding firm at Chittagong Port Thursday night in connection with holding for ransom imported goods of an industry.

The arrestees are: Mia Ahmad Kibria, owner of Arfan Express, and Asiful Shamim, manager of the same firm.

Immediately after their arrest under Emergency Powers Rules around 9:30pm Thursday, joint forces handed them over to Bandar Police Station. They were subsequently produced before the court yesterday afternoon, said Sub-inspector Abdul Jalil of the police station concerned. The court sent the two to jail yesterday afternoon.

According to the first information report of the case, Golden Sun, a company that makes household appliances, imported raw materials in three cargo containers. The containers reached Chittagong Port from Taiwan around two months ago but the accused freight-forwarding firm demanded \$22,000 extra citing instances of irregularities in the import process and refused to dispatch the goods, said Executive Director of Golden Sun Belal Ahmad.

Belal said repeated attempts to free the freight through authorities concerned failed and they were forced to file a case.

BSF kills

FROM PAGE 1

According to a correspondent, BDR and BSF traded gunfire on Pachvul border in Benapole early yesterday, leaving a Bangladeshi youth injured.

The injured, Khalil, 30, son of Abdul Khaled of Pachvul village, was admitted to a local clinic.

A tense situation is prevailing in the area.

Expelled two

FROM PAGE 1 informed the EC about the changes in the party's line-up. It told the commission that the former LGRD minister does not belong to the party anymore and cannot represent it at any level.

Since then, the factions led by Bhuiyan and Khandaker Delwar continue to be at odds over establishing themselves as the main-stream.

Sources said both the groups have taken measures to hold council to ensure their control over the party. Bhuiyan faction wants to hold the council amid the state of emergency, but pro-Khaleda group wants it after withdrawal of the ban on indoor politics.

"We will announce schedule for the party council after the government lifts the ban," Hannan Shah said yesterday.

Reiterating his claim that they still are the real BNP, the expelled secretary general yesterday told reporters, "We're the successors to late president Ziaur Rahman."

"Through reforms we will make the BNP into a more acceptable, powerful and pro-people organisation and most of the leaders and former lawmakers are with us," he said adding that they are hopeful the

Cricketer Opi

FROM PAGE 16 Sadeq Road residence in Old Dhaka. Opi was produced before the court in the afternoon.

A Dhaka court had issued an arrest warrant against Opi on Thursday.

A few friends of Opi said the former cricketer has two wives and his relation with first wife Runi has not been well for the last two years.

Meanwhile, Ramma police said Runi was also arrested on Thursday in connection with a case filed for not repaying a loan and produced before the court.

Ahsan Rahman Arju filed the case against Runi yesterday for not repaying a loan she had taken from him in February.

Opi is the first Bangladeshi batsman to strike a century in a One Day International (ODI) match. He played nine ODIs and 18 Test matches as opener of the national cricket team. He played his last ODI in 2003 in South Africa.

Yunus

FROM PAGE 16

will soon be appointed to this chair in consultation with Prof Yunus.

The varsity authorities formally appointed the Nobel laureate as honorary professor of the university in the department of economics. He will be entitled to all privileges of a regular faculty member of the university, including accommodation.

The university will send students to undertake researches in Bangladesh under the supervision of Prof Yunus. The micro-credit pioneer will also be included in various committees of the university.

Prof Yunus was also honoured yesterday in separate ceremonies by the Saudi Council of Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Bangladeshi community in Riyadh.

Businessman

FROM PAGE 16

youths identifying themselves as Emon's friends called him out of his house at Islampur at around 10:00pm on Thursday and since then he had been missing.

He further said Shyampur police got a SIM card in the pocket of Emon's trousers, activated it and called him at around 3:30am. "Receiving the phone call, I went to the spot and identified my son," Ibrahim said.

The reason behind the killing could not be known until the filing of this report as of 8:00pm yesterday.

Family members said they have a quarrel with an influential man at Islampur over purchasing a house in the locality and Emon might have been killed for this reason.

10 Jamaat men

FROM PAGE 16

Chan Mollah, Hafez, Lutfur, Awal, and Abu Taleb.

The complainant alleged that the accused attacked the temple while the local Hindus were celebrating Janmashtami, the birth of lord Krishna.

He said, "Armed with sticks and sharp weapons, they stormed the Mandir and threatened us to stop the three-day programme. They knocked down the shed built for the guests, cut down trees and damaged the rath (chariot)."

Police said Aminul, son of Joynal Abedin of Chandpur village under Comilla Sadar upazila, was involved in serial blasts in the district town on August 17, 2005.

During interrogation, Aminul told police that he was an "ehsar" member of the banned Islamist outfit.

JMB man held in Comilla

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

The blasts in Algeria have also raised a spectre of the return to the violence of the 1990s, which at its worst pitted the authorities against the hardline Armed Islamic Groups (GIA).

Former Bogra MPs

FROM PAGE 1 Chan Sifauzzaman Talukder, and 12 others.

On Wednesday, former BNP lawmaker Kazi Rafiqul Islam Rafique and his two brothers were sued for extortion.

Karnipara Union Parishad Member Zillahul Islam filed the case with the court, accusing the three of extorting Tk 2 lakh from him on September 23, 2005.

Koko

FROM PAGE 1

Sahana Afzal visited him in the jail.

Called in by the jail authorities, Associate Professor of BSMU Dr Manju Mahmud had examined his physical condition at 2:00pm and suggested admitting him to the Coronary Care Unit of BSMU for better treatment. Earlier, a Dhaka court sent Koko to jail with orders to take care of his health.

Since his arrest, Koko had been under observation of two other doctors.

Koko's wife Sharmila Rahman and her grandmother visited Koko and his detained mother Khaleda Zia yesterday afternoon.

During the hour-long stay at the jail superintendent's room, Sharmila gave a jainamaz to Koko. Sharmila also visited Khaleda Zia at 4:45pm in the sub-jail on the Jatiya Sangsad premises.

Earlier on Thursday, Sharmila along with Koko's elder brother Tarique Rahman's wife Jobaida Rahman went to the gate of the sub-jail to meet her mother-in-law, but the jail authorities allowed only Jobaida to meet her.

About the pro-Bhuiyan leaders' claim that by taking the "autarchic decision" the former prime minister has in fact showed how badly the party needs reforms, Hannan said Khaleda Zia had to make the decision all by herself as the country is now under the state of emergency.

He said, "Our party chief has taken a right decision at the right time, and once again she proved herself to be an uncompromising leader."

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Heavy rain

FROM PAGE 1

The district fisheries department sources said more than 1,200 shrimp enclosures and over 5,000 ponds in Galachipa, Kalapara, Dashmina, Baufal, Dumki, Mirzaganj and Sadar upazilas were inundated.

Our Niphamari correspondent reported that heavy rainfall over the last three days submerged several unions of the district including East Chaanti, West Chaanti, Khaghrabari, Teparkhbari, Goyabari, Khalisa, Chapani, Jhugaccha, and Chapani of Dimla upazila, Goolmunda, Shoulmari, and Koimari of Jaldhaka upazila.

Our Barisal correspondent reported that communication on 28 internal and five coastal routes of the region were often disrupted due to choppy rivers. The report also added that continuous adverse weather was pounding the region for the last two days.

Government new agency the BSS reported that the flood situation in the country worsened following continuous rise in the water levels of the major rivers due to heavy rainfall in almost all the northern districts.

A number of villages on shoals, agricultural lands, bazaars and educational institutions on the banks of the Teesta, Brahmaputra, Dhrarla, Ghaghat, Dudhkumar, Jamuna, Zirzir, Sonavari and on the banks of other tributaries are facing threats of being washed away due to land erosion.

UNB reported that around 50,000 people of 40 villages in Lalmonirhat were marooned by a flood.

Our correspondents from Rangamati and Khagrachari reported that several thousands of people from 11 upazilas of the two districts were marooned by a fresh flood in the 24 hours preceding last evening. Thousands of people took shelters on high lands and in flood shelters.

In the 24 hours preceding 8:30pm yesterday 120mm of rain fell in Khagrachari, inundating

the bus terminal in the district headquarters.

Ten to fifteen houses were inundated on the banks of the Chengi River, while 50,000 people in 50 areas of the district headquarters were marooned.

Rahul David and his men have shown tremendous resilience to bounce back from a 1-3 deficit and the hallowed turf of the Lord's provides the perfect setting for an engrossing battle between the two teams.

The sensational win in the last game at The Oval on Wednesday will be a huge morale-booster for India as the batsmen showed character to snatch a win from the jaws of defeat.

The seven-batsman strategy paid dividends for the team in the last two matches and it was the scintillating strokeplay by youngster Robin Uthappa, who came into bat at number seven, which helped India clinch the cliff-hanger at the Oval.

The visitors will probably retain the same combination for the summit showdown where the batsmen would again have to play a big role.

David knows that the decider will not be a cakewalk for his players who have to show a lot of character to win their third match on the trot.

England-India

FROM PAGE 16

the decider at the Lord's here Saturday.

The Indians have already made the tour of England memorable by winning the Test series 1-0 after a gap of 21 years and an ODI series victory would serve as the icing on the cake.

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Nepali Cong

FROM PAGE 16

central committee member, said Nepal's oldest and largest party had taken a "most important and relevant decision" to ditch the king.

Already unpopular when he came to the throne after a palace massacre blamed on a drunken crown prince in 2001, King Gyanendra earned international condemnation when he sacked the government and assumed direct control in February 2005.

He was forced to end his direct rule in April 2006 after sidelined political parties and rebel Maoists organised massive nation-wide protests.

The rebels went on to sign a peace deal and take up positions in parliament and an interim cabinet, and have been campaigning hard for the monarchy to be abolished.

The Unified Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (UML), the Himalayan nation's second biggest party, also wants a republic.

Veteran Congress leader and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala had said in the past that some space should be left for the

monarchy in Nepal, including the suggestion that Paras's four-year-old son Hridayendra be declared king.

But top Congress politician Acharya said now "the Nepali Congress, UML and the Maoists have all now taken a republican stance."

"I think this means that the place of a monarchy in Nepali politics has ended," he said.

The party move capped a difficult week for the king, who was traditionally considered to be the living incarnation of a Hindu god.

On Thursday, Gyanendra's only son suffered what doctors said was a "major" heart attack -- a common occurrence in Nepal's royal family and apparently aggravated by the 36-year-old Paras' playboy lifestyle.

"Prince Paras is under regular observation and he is recovering well," Sham Bahadur Pandey, one of the doctors treating the prince, said Friday.

"He had high levels of cholesterol and blood pressure, so we are going to advise him to control his diet once he gets better," Pandey said.

The crown prince has been mired in controversy, with accusations against him including drunken armed assaults in Kathmandu, speedboat races, speeding through the streets of Kathmandu on his Harley Davidson and beating police officials.

Tens of thousands of Nepalis signed a petition calling for action against the prince in 2000 when his vehicle struck and killed a popular singer. No action was taken.

His motorcade was stoned in Kathmandu in December 2005. Paras later suspended three senior police officials, accusing them of failing to provide proper security.

Laden to taunt US again in video marking 9/11

AFP, Washington

Osama bin Laden plans to emerge from the shadows to taunt the United States again in a video message marking the sixth anniversary of the September 11 attacks, US-based

intelligence agencies said.

The SITE Intelligence Group has learned that a new video message is forthcoming from the head of al-Qaeda's on the 9/11