

Suicide bombing at Benazir's homecoming parade kills 138

The unhurt former Pak premier terms it 'an attack on democracy'



Benazir Bhutto

AFP, Karachi

Former Pakistani premier Benazir Bhutto yesterday condemned a suicide bombing that killed at least 138 people at her homecoming parade in Karachi, calling it an "attack on democracy".

Bhutto was unhurt in Thursday night's attack, having climbed into her specially fortified vehicle just moments before two explosions ripped through crowds welcoming her back to Karachi after eight years in exile.

The streets, packed with hundreds of thousands of her jubilant supporters, quickly became a scene of bloody carnage. The campaign bus was scorched and

denied.

"The attack was not on me, the attack was on what I represent," Bhutto told a press conference in the port city.

"It was an attack on democracy and it was an attack on the very unity and integrity of Pakistan."

Bhutto pledged to defy the "cowards" from Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and other militant groups who had vowed to launch suicide attacks against her before she flew home from Dubai.

"If it means sacrificing our lives, then we are prepared to risk our lives, but we are not prepared to surrender our great nation to the militants," she said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Mohammed Zia ul-Haq

'Zia ul-Haq's men behind bombing'

AFP, Paris

Benazir Bhutto yesterday accused supporters of Pakistan's late military ruler Mohammed Zia ul-Haq of being behind the bomb blasts that killed at least 138 people after her arrival in Karachi.

In an interview published in French on the Internet site of Paris-Match magazine, Bhutto said she

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Dhaka condemns Karachi bombing

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday condemned the bombing in Karachi targeting former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto as she returned home after eight years in exile.

A spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs described as "a blatantly act of cowardice" the blast that killed at least 138 people and left many more injured.

The spokesman conveyed heartfelt sympathy to the members of the bereaved families and prayed for early recovery of the injured.

Bangladesh Awami League yesterday also condemned the suicide attack on the homecoming procession of former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto. In a joint statement, Awami League Acting President Zillur Rahman and Acting General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam urged the global community to take appropriate steps to eliminate the culprits.

BRINGING BACK FROM INDIA Dual citizenship of criminals hinders process

EMRAN HOSSAIN

The move to bring back criminals hiding in India on mutual understanding is facing a setback due to dual citizenship of many of the criminals.

One of the two criminals arrested by Indian police moved to a court recently claiming himself as an Indian national, and innocent, hindering the process.

Indian police are trying to resolve the problem legally and asked Bangladesh police to provide them with necessary documents and evidence about some top listed criminals hiding in India over the years.

In response to this, Criminal

Investigation Department (CID) of police has already sent bits of evidence and documents about 10 such criminals.

"We expect that the problem will be resolved in a couple of days as Indian authorities are bent on helping us, and we also hope to get two top listed criminals back by October 25 or 26," said Abdullah Aref, additional superintendent of the CID.

"Bringing back criminals is a historic incident as both the countries are doing the job without having any extradition treaty," Aref told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We are in contact with high police officials in India and they are

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Bodies lie, left, on a Karachi street following a suicide attack on former Pakistan PM Benazir Bhutto's homecoming procession Thursday night. Pakistani paramilitary soldiers stand guard in front of the damaged truck which was carrying her.

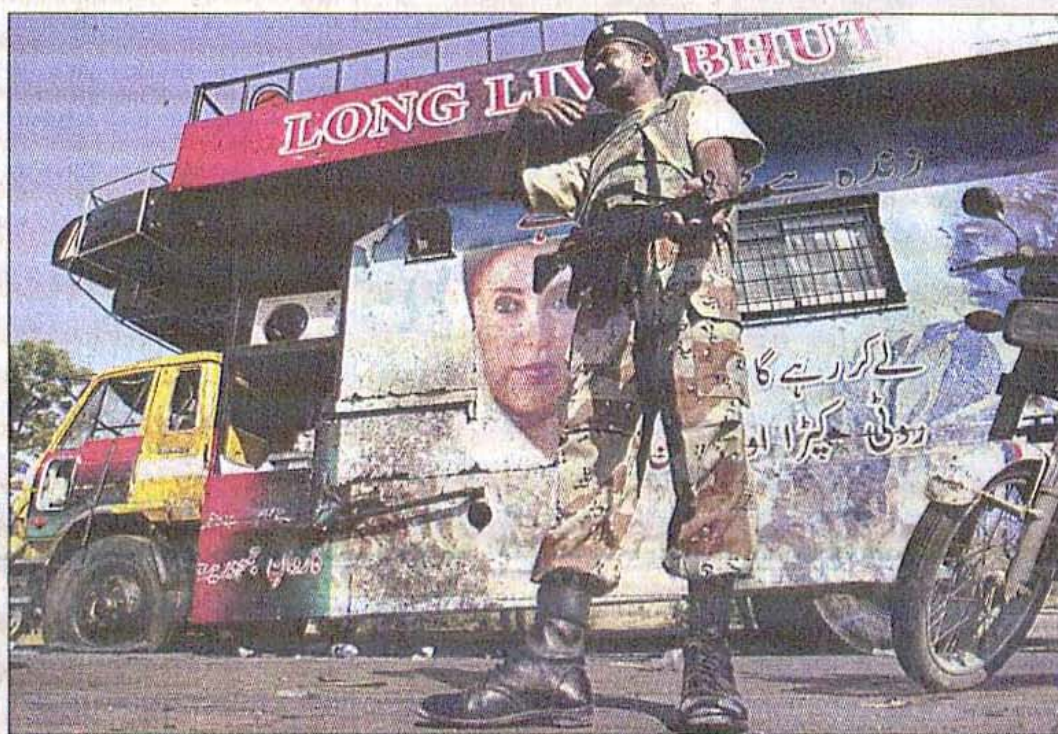


PHOTO: AFP

More reforms in the pipeline: Gen Moeen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff Gen Moeen U Ahmed yesterday said it would be a disgrace for the nation if the two detained top leaders are allowed to lead their parties even in the case of conviction for corruption.

Speaking at a press conference of the expatriate Bangladeshi journalists at Bangladesh Consulate in New York, he said, "We have no grudge against them. The government respects them [Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia] as the daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and wife of late president Ziaur Rahman."

Asked if the government has been interfering in court procedures to punish the two former premiers, he said the two have been detained on charges of cor-

ruption and they are not being tried by any secret tribunals. They are on trial at open courts.

"If they walk out free, well that's okay...then they are not corrupt. But if they are found to be corrupt, I'm not saying they are corrupt, would you still like to call them leaders. I leave it to you," New York-based news agency News World quoted him as saying.

The army chief was visibly annoyed when queried whether the government is pursuing a minus-two formula modelled on that of Pakistan to dislodge Khaleda Zia and Hasina. He asked, "Why does always the Pakistani theory come up?"

"Pakistan promulgated martial law, we did not. Then why is such attitude," he questioned.

"You have to keep it in mind that our army fought the Pakistani

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

NBR to file tax evasion cases against 7 bigwigs

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is going to file tax evasion cases against former MP Mossadeque Ali Fala, former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and five others.

The NBR on October 17 at a board meeting decided to file cases against the seven alleged tax evaders.

The five others are former whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah, former MPs Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan and Habibur Rahman Mollah, BNP Sylhet unit leader Ariful Haque Chowdhury and former chief conservator of forest Munshi Anwarul Islam.

All the seven are accused of concealing their actual income and providing fabricated information in their wealth statements and income tax returns.

"We'll file cases soon against the persons for tax evasion," an NBR high official said yesterday asking not to be named.

MOSSADEQUE ALI FALA Mossadeque Ali Fala allegedly concealed actual wealth he owned from 1996-97 to 2006-07 fiscal years and provided wrong information during these 11 tax years.

According to an NBR assessment, Fala hid his bank deposit of Tk 89.33 lakh, bank interest of Tk 2.08 lakh and house rent of Tk 11.29 lakh in the fiscal year 2006-07.

He also concealed in his wealth statement Tk 2.87 crore, which he invested in building 'Khaleda Zia Geriatric Home' at Ashulia, Tk 1.14 crore, which he invested in building a retreat house there, Tk 1.85 crore bank deposit, Tk 10.5 lakh house rent and Tk 5.2 lakh bank interest in FY 06, the assessment says.

Fala also hid Tk 2.6 crore bank deposit in FY 05, Tk 28.5 lakh in FY 04, Tk 48.21 lakh in FY 03, Tk 24.11 lakh in FY 02, and concealed house rent in all the 11 years from FY 97 to FY 07, the assessment adds.

Largest Taxpayers Unit (LTU) Commissioner Nurul Amin sought permission to file cases and the board approved it unanimously.

MOHIUDDIN KHAN ALAMGIR The NBR found that former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir has concealed in his income tax returns and wealth statements Tk 1.28 crore fixed deposit, Tk 1.5 crore bank deposit and Tk 1.7 lakh bank interest in 25 years from FY 82 to FY 07.

He also hid Tk 31.62 lakh bank deposit in his statements during the period, the Board found.

During the corresponding period, Mohiuddin invested

EC'S REPORTED DECISION Hannan hails while Mannan doubts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The pro-Khaleda Zia BNP faction yesterday welcomed the Election Commission's (EC) reported decision to invite the party's new secretary general to the ongoing dialogue on electoral reforms.

On the other hand, the pro-reform group led by expelled secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said they doubt if the commission had really decided anything of that sort. They warned that the aim to hold a free and fair election would not be fulfilled if it opts to ask anyone else instead of them to participate in the talks that began on September 12.

With Chairperson Khaleda Zia being detained on corruption charges since September 3, both the groups have been vying to get an invitation as the ones represent-

ing the mainstream BNP. The dialogue between the commission and the immediate past ruling party is slated for November 22.

According to media reports, CEC Dr ATM Shamsul Huda on Thursday said the EC has examined the BNP constitution and decided that Khandaker Delwar Hossain deserves the invitation as the BNP secretary general.

Brig Gen (ret'd) Hannan Shah, an adviser to the chairperson, thanked the CEC for the decision that he said is a timely one.

"I hope now they will refrain from making a duplicate BNP," he said hinting at Bhuiyan and his allies.

He added that any decision to be taken by the expelled partymen in the name of BNP is bound to be adjudged illegal.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Oil prices hit record \$90.07

AFP, London

Oil prices soared to another record high above 90 dollars per barrel yesterday amid global supply jitters and tensions between Turkey and crude producer Iraq, dealers said.

New York's main futures contract, light sweet crude for delivery in November, touched 90.07 dollars per barrel in early afternoon deals. That beat the previous high of 90.02 dollars set late on Thursday.

London's Brent North Sea crude for December delivery was flat at 84.60 dollars after hitting a record 84.88 dollars on Thursday.

"Persistent geopolitical fears provide good support to oil prices," said analyst Andrey Kryuchkov at the Sudden brokerage in London.

This week, red hot crude prices have blazed a record-breaking trail as Turkey has moved closer towards a military incursion into northern Iraq - where many of the troubled country's largest oil fields are based.

11 killed, 20 hurt as truck, bus collide in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Eleven people, including four women and a boy, were killed and 20 others were injured as a truck collided with a Dhaka-bound bus in Bogra yesterday.

Witnesses said the truck lost control and hit the bus of SA Paribahan from Dinajpur at Dhankundi of Shibganj upazila at 1:15pm, leaving nine people killed on the spot.

Two more died at Sherpur Medical College Hospital after being rushed to hospital.

Other injured, including Assistant Superintendent of Police Kamruzzaman of Dinajpur, were admitted to different hospitals in Shibganj and Bogra town.

Hitting the bus, the truck fell in a ditch by the Dhaka-Bogra Highway

and plunged in water. Police sources said all the injured and deceased are from different parts of Dinajpur.

Eight of the dead were identified as Dwip, 8, Rumi 25, Akhteruzzaman, 28, Sergeant Ariful Islam, 30, Masud Rana, 25, Farhad, 22, Rupa, 28, and Mahfuz, 13.

ESS adds: Two persons were killed in two separate road accidents on the Bogra-Nagarbari highway yesterday.

Police said rickshaw van driver Abdul Hamid 35, died on the spot when a Rangpur-bound truck from Baghabari hit the rickshaw van from the opposite side in Selondah area at about 3:30pm.

Meanwhile, an unidentified person died on the spot when a Dhaka-bound bus ran over him in the same area at about 4pm.

Kumari Puja celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hindu devotees yesterday celebrated Kumari Puja, worship of the virgin form of Goddess Durga, at different mandaps across the country amid fanfare. Mahanabami puja will be held today.

According to the lunar schedule, Mahanabami puja will begin at 7:40am. Nabami Bhog (food and fruits) is offered to Durga, who is worshipped as the goddess of supreme power. The bhog is later distributed among devotees.

Thousands of people yesterday gathered at the Ramakrishna Mission Temple in the city to worship Kumari Durga in a six-year old girl adorned with flowers and jewellery, alta on her feet and a tilak of sindur (vermillion) on her forehead.

Arati was performed along with beats of drums (dhak), blowing of conches, bells and cymbals and high-pitched ululation during the Kumari Puja from 11:00am to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



A priest performs the rituals of the Kumari Puja at Ram Krishna Mission in the capital yesterday as part of Durga Puja, the largest religious festival of the Hindus.

PHOTO: STAR

EU team in Khulna to see shrimp processing

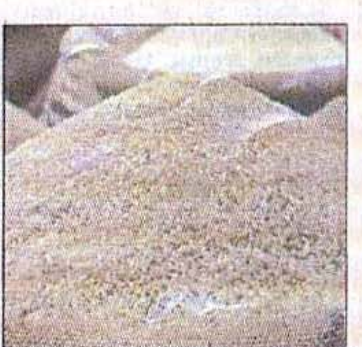
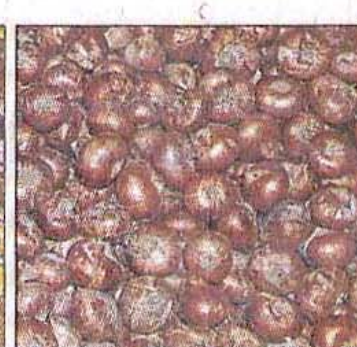
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A two-member team of European Union arrived in Khulna yesterday from Dhaka to inspect quality of shrimp production and processing before export.

The members of the team are inspectors of EU Food and Veterinary office in Brussels. According to Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association (BFFEA) Vice President Sheikh Abdul Baki, members of the EU team will go for a trip to the Sundarbans today where they will see the fishing in river, creeks and canals.

On October 21, the team will visit and inspect shrimp enclosures, hatcheries, fish-feed production centres, shrimp landing centres, fish inspection and quality control lab and shrimp processing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



Fresh round of price hike Rice, edible oil, onion dearer

SHAHEEN MOLLAI and MAMUN AL MOSTOFA

Prices of vegetable oil, rice, potato, onion and eggs shot up just after the Eid due to alleged short supply in the kitchen markets of the capital.

Wholesalers in Karwan Bazar in the city said due to Eid and Durga Puja, religious festivals of Muslims and Hindus, coinciding there was

not timely supply of these commodities causing a short-term price increase.

Price of soybean oil rose by at least Tk 5 per litre at different retail and wholesale markets in the city.

Soybean was selling between Tk 85 and 86 in retail markets while it was Tk 80 during Ramadan. Palm oil was being sold at Tk 80 per litre yesterday, which was Tk 75 before the Eid.

A five-litre jerry can of soybean oil was selling at Tk 409 at Karwan Bazar yesterday; it was Tk 384 during Ramadan. Traders said the price of soybean oil has been on the rise for the last three days.

In a number of retail markets in the city yesterday, onions (local variety) were selling at Tk 65 while the Indian variety was selling at Tk 55 a kg. But before Eid, local variety

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6