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AUG 21 ATTACKS Mufti Hannan remanded for 10 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Harkat-ul Jihad al Islami (Huji) leader Mufti Hannan on a 10-day remand in a case filed in connection with the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally.

The investigation into the grenade attack on the AL rally took a new turn yesterday when CID investigators showed Hannan arrested in connection with the case and sought a 14-day remand before the court.

The investigation officer (IO) of the grenade attack case, Assistant Superintendent of Police of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Fazlul Kabir, in the forwarding report placed before the court said Mufti Hannan revealed that he and his associates were involved in the attack. The IO said Hannan masterminded the attack.

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Dhaka for pragmatic ties with Yangon

ASHFAQ WARES KHAN

Dhaka will maintain relations with Yangon based on mutual self-interests and pragmatism, but supports UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari's efforts and may join a Thai initiative for a group of Myanmar's neighbours to resolve the ongoing crisis there.

"Bangladesh has a very secular relationship with Myanmar, as much as it requires to maintain good bilateral relations between two neighbours seeking their own interests," Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury told The Daily Star last night.

At least three deals between Bangladesh and Myanmar have already stalled due to the crisis that also pushed back Dhaka's efforts to involve Myanmar in the Asian Highway Network.

But Dhaka's pragmatic

approach of pursuing bilateral interests with Myanmar does not preclude the continuing support to the UN initiative to reconcile tension between the military junta and the pro-democracy opposition, said the foreign adviser.

Iftekhar publicly supported the Gambari initiative yesterday, after he met a farewell call by Thai Ambassador Suphat Chitranukroh. "We've already said Bangladesh supports the Gambari initiative under UN auspices," he said.

Dhaka may also join a Thailand-initiated grouping of neighbours to hold talks with Myanmar, highly-placed foreign ministry officials told The Daily Star.

Iftekhar also hinted at such a move after his meeting with the outgoing Thai ambassador, saying, "Yes, we will seek to work with Thailand and other neighbours on the issue."

The foreign adviser is also hopeful about engagement of the Myanmar government as they have also agreed to end a four-year ban on Human Rights Rapporteur.

"We are pleased to learn today [yesterday] that Myanmar will accept a visit by Human Rights Rapporteur Paolo Pinheiro after four years. This shows that patience often pays in such matters," he said.

Iftekhar met Gambari during his recent trip to New York, where they held discussions on Dhaka's potential role in resolving the Myanmar crisis.

Thailand is reported to be looking at forging a five-country grouping of Myanmar's neighbours to hold talks with the military leadership there.

China has already released strong statements that the ongoing

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Joining EC talks first step to contest polls

Says ALGS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) has decided to participate in the Election Commission's (EC) dialogue on electoral reforms as preparatory to contesting the next general elections, the party's acting general secretary yesterday said.

Syed Ashrafur Islam said they also want to field candidates in local-government polls and called for opening indoor politics, now allowed only in the capital, across the country.

"I hope our party President Sheikh Hasina will be released (from jail) through legal and constitutional steps; we'll take part in the next elections under her leadership," he told reporters at his apartment.

Stressing the need for lifting the ban on indoor politics from across the country immediately, Ashraf said they will not otherwise be able to prepare for the upcoming

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The army-led Task Force against Crime and Corruption yesterday stormed into the National Housing Authority Bhawan in Dhaka, set up a temporary office and installed a complaint box to monitor activities of the housing authority.

WB president due Nov 3

BSS, Dhaka

World Bank (WB) President Robert B Zoellick will arrive in Dhaka on November 3 on a two-day visit to Bangladesh.

Official sources said Zoellick is scheduled to meet Chief Adviser Fakhrudin Ahmed and Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam during his stay in the capital.

Zoellick's meetings with the chief adviser and the finance adviser may touch on the caretaker government move to fight corruption and restore good governance.

He is likely to meet Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and

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Task force starts quizzing three criminals deported from India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Joint Interrogation Task Force yesterday started interrogating the three criminals who had been deported from India on October 7 and handed over to Bangladesh authorities.

The interrogation started a day after a Dhaka court placed the three criminals -- Habibur Rahman Taj, Sohail alias Ibrahim and Biplob Rahman alias Lambu Selim -- on a fresh five-day remand.

The three criminals, during

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Hatirjheel survey begins today for development

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) today starts conducting a survey in Hatirjheel and Begunbari canal area in the capital for construction of a connecting road between Rampura bridge and Panthapath under a Tk 1,474 crore project.

Two storm water retention ponds will also be dug -- one near Sonargaon Hotel and the other in Hatirjheel area -- under the project approved by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec).

"A joint team of the law enforcers and Buet visited the area yesterday in preparation for the survey needed to design the road and ponds," said Haider Ali, director of the project, scheduled to be completed within 30 months.

The project -- Integrated development project of Hatirjheel and Begunbari area -- is being funded by the government. Of the project cost, Tk crore 550.52 will be paid simply through bybook transfer for government land acquisition. And Tk 459.48 crore will be spent for acquiring 111 acres of private land for the project Ecneec approved on October 10, sources said.

Under the supervision of housing and public works ministry, Rajdhan Unnayan Kartipakha (Rajuk), Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) and Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) will implement the project with the help of Buet and joint forces.

It is a much-talked-about issue for long that Hatirjheel and Begunbari canals must be saved to protect the capital from inundation as these form the lone natural drainage system for storm water.

But over the years, various private organisations, influential locals and also government institutions have built structures on the canals choking and making those vulnerable.

According to a Rajuk survey, there are more than 1,200 illegal establishments in the canal area.

Local Government and Rural Development Adviser Anwarul Iqbal recently said all illegal establishments including Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) building will be demolished. "Whatever structures are built without approval in Begunbari and Hatirjheel area will be demolished," he told a meeting at the ministry.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Task force to monitor NHA activities

UNB, Dhaka

The army-led Task Force against Crimes and Corruption yesterday stormed into the National Housing Authority (NHA) Bhawan on the premises of the Housing and Public Works Department and camped there to monitor its activities.

A team of the task force, led by Lt Col Abdul Khaleq, appeared at the National Housing Bhawan about 11:00am. After monitoring affairs of the department, the task force set up a temporary office on the ground floor of the building.

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Hospital lift falls from 8th floor: 15 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A poorly maintained elevator at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) on Monday came tumbling down from 8th floor, endangering the lives of its passengers including a pregnant woman, her unborn child, an infant and 12 others.

The incident occurred at around 11:30am in Block C of BSMMU.

The impact of the fall was so severe that the pregnant woman's foetus membrane was ruptured

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Female suicide squad threatens to attack Benazir Bhutto

PTI, AFP, Islamabad

Former Pakistan premier Benazir Bhutto has received a threat that she would be targeted by female suicide bombers, one of her close aides said yesterday.

Farooq Naik, a senior lawyer and member of the Senate or upper house of parliament, said the chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party had received a letter that contained the threat.

The letter was purportedly written by the leader of the suicide squad, Naik told Dawn News channel.

Naik indicated that the bombers might be linked to terrorist groups like al-Qaeda.

The development came five days after a suicide attack on Benazir Bhutto's homecoming rally in the southern port city of Karachi that claimed nearly 140

lives and injured hundreds more.

Benazir Bhutto, who returned to Pakistan on October 18 after eight years in self-exile, had earlier alleged that three senior government officials were behind attempts to assassinate her. She has also claimed that jihadi elements in the establishment who were close to late military dictator Gen Zia-ul-Haq were targeting her.

The government has dismissed her allegations and Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao has said that he believes extremists from Pakistan's restive tribal areas bordering Afghanistan were behind the attack on Benazir Bhutto's motorcade.

Meanwhile, Benazir Bhutto said Tuesday she is considering "virtual" mass rallies and campaigning via phone to avoid mass violence after last week's deadly suicide

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DU dormitories reopen after 8 weeks

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) dormitories reopened yesterday aimed at resuming academic activities on October 28 after over eight weeks following violent incidents on the university campus last August.

A small number of students returned to 16 DU halls including four for female students on the first day. The students entered the dormitories, reopened at 9:30am.

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BSF kills 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down a Bangladeshi cattle trader on Kotol border in Thakurgaon's Haripur upazila early morning yesterday, BDR officials said.

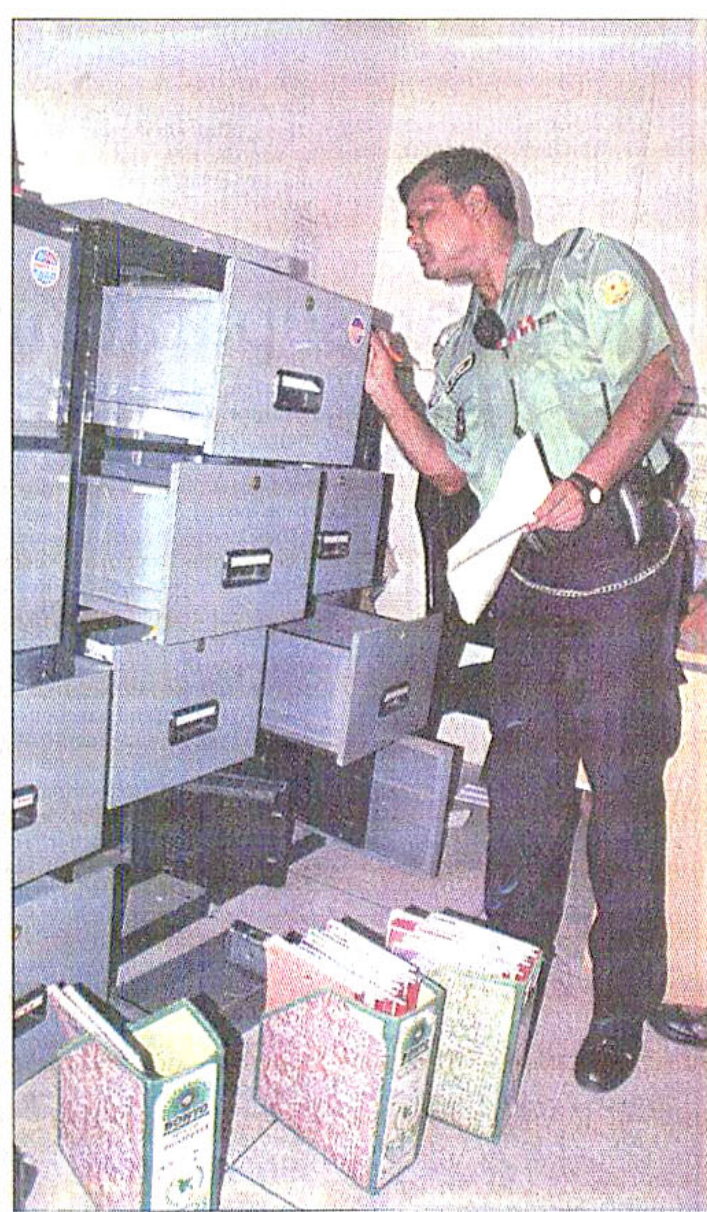
The dead was identified as Mohammad Manjur Alam, 28, son of late Ratul Alam at Bhaturia Pashchimpara village in the upazila.

BDR officials at 14 Battalion said BSF troops at Krishanganj camp opened fire on a group of

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Prayer Timing		
October 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:50	5:25
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:36	5:39
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Police conducting a probe at a private company office at Purana Paltan in the capital yesterday after Tk 13 lakh was stolen from there.

BPC stares at \$650m loss

AFP, Dhaka

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) expects to lose a record Tk 4,500 crore this fiscal year due to a sharp increase in global crude prices.

The BPC incurred a loss of around Tk 762 crore (\$110 million) in the first three and half months of the fiscal year beginning in July.

"But with global oil prices around 90 dollars a barrel, our loss this fiscal year would cross Tk 4,500 crore (\$650 million)," BPC Chairman Anwarul Karim told AFP over telephone on Monday evening.

Oil prices have risen 50 percent

over the past 12 months and on Thursday the price of a barrel reached a new 90-dollar high.

"It's a tough situation for us. We have urged the government to raise the fuel prices or give us subsidy to cover the losses," he added.

In April, Bangladesh's military-backed emergency government hiked fuel prices by as much as 21 percent when world crude prices were 60 to 65 dollars a barrel.

"Since then the crude prices in the international market have been increasing everyday. As a result, the prices of refined oil in the country are far lower than the international market," Karim said.

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ACC sues ex-CCF Munshi Anwarul for hiding wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against former chief conservator of forest Munshi Anwarul Islam on charges of amassing illegal wealth and providing false statement about his property to the watchdog.

ACC Assistant Director SM Sahidur Rahman filed the case with Ramna Police Station under sections 26(2) and 27(1) of ACC Act, 2004 and Emergency Power Rules, 2007.

The complainant in his first information report stated that although the former top forester drew a total salary of Tk 30.49 lakh

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NOTICE FOR LOTTERY OF MPB APPLICATIONS

Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited announces with pleasure that the lottery for allotment of Mudaraba Perpetual Bonds (MPB) against RPO will be held at 11.00 a.m. on Thursday the 25th October, 2007 at the Plenary Hall of Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

All concerned are requested to kindly attend the Lottery.

* Result of the lottery will be hung in the lottery venue as well as 9-I (1st & 2nd Floor), Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka.

Date : 24.10.2007

By Order
MD. Shouquat Ali
Executive Vice President & Company Secretary

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