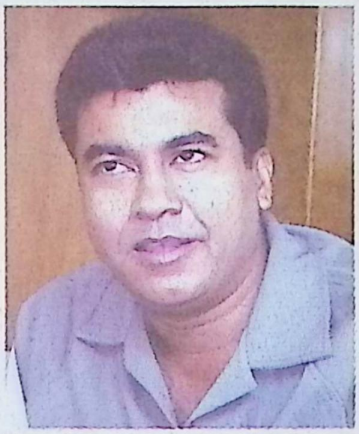
# A Popular Hero Gone Too Soon

If it's true that how popular a person is can only be appreciated after his death then the hundreds of thousands of fans that thronged the FDC building all the way to the Central Shaheed Minar and then on to Elenga in Tangail to lay his body in the graveyard proves that SM Aslam Talukder Manna was one of the most loved film heroes of his time. Manna passed away at the United Hospital in Dhaka following a heart attack on Sunday, February 17, 2008. A veteran of more than 300 films, Manna, at the age of 44, was still playing the romantic lead role in films with other old and newcomer leading ladies.



Manna

Manna's career began in 1984 after he was discovered through a talent search programme by the Film Development Corporation. Manna was the General Secretary of Bangladesh Film Actors Association. As the General Secretary of the organisation, he had remarkable contribution to the ongoing movement against 'vulgarity' in the Bangladesh film industry. Among films released last year, Manna played lead roles in commercially successful films including Shajghar, Khomotar Garom, Moner Shathey Juddho, Machine-man, Ulta-Palta 69 and Shotru Shotru Khela.

At least 50 people, including three policemen, were injured in sporadic clashes when fans overcome with emotion wanted to take a last look at the dead body of their favourite hero. According to witnesses the police charged at the mob with truncheons and fired teargas shells to bring the situation under control as they tried to enter the FDC. A large number of people also thronged Central Shaheed Minar in the morning and blocked roads in the area. Many fans climbed trees to have a last glimpse. Thousands of his admires thronged the Central Eidgah premises to pay tribute to their hero when his body was taken there from Dhaka.

# Fighting Terror



Last week, the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), following a tip-off, unearthed a huge cache of grenades from a pond in Satkhira. The Rab, which has carried out similar operations to make several such discoveries in different parts of the country, deserves praise for a job well done. Some members of the elite crime-busting unit were injured a few weeks ago while carrying out an operation to arrest terrorists in the capital. Having said that, the arrest of Huji leader Mufti Moin Uddin alias Abu Jandal alias Masum Billah, and the events leading up to the seizure of Arges grenade suggest that some terrorists are still at large, ready to launch a new terrorist attack on innocent people in the name of Islam, a religion that shuns any form of extremism.

This particular brand of grenade, interestingly, was used, as Director General of Rab Hassan Mahmood Khandkar has said, in the attack on an Awami League rally on August 21 in 2004; the blasts left 24 dead and hundreds more injured. What is interesting about the Rab's Satkhira operation is that people from all walks of life have extended their support to the battalion in finding and unearthing the deadly grenades. The government, alone, it needs to be told, will not be able to route extremism out unless and until the ordinary masses are sensitised about these vendors of death who are not only against Bangladesh as a modern democratic state, the acts of these terrorists are, in fact, go against the teachings of our sacred religion. It is time the government considers a campaign to isolate the terrorists from the ordinary people of the country, where, it is needless to say, there is no place for bigotry and intolerance.

These terrorists, who deal in death, must be tried immediately. Meanwhile, the crime busters, who are leading our own war on terror, should be armed with more modern weaponry. In a world, which is becoming more and more a dangerous place in which to live, Bangladesh has remained one of the few countries largely untouched by extremism, and we want to remain so in the days to come.