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AUG 21 ATTACK
Probe taking
time for extra
caution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad yesterday said the police are taking time to complete the investigation of the August 21, 2004 grenade attack case in a bid to avoid further controversies.

"The case is very sensitive and there have been a lot of controversies over the investigation of it," the IGP told reporters after giving out prizes to winners at a sports event in Shaheed Police Memorial School and College in the capital.

"We don't want any controversy after indictments. The charge sheet will be submitted after an elaborate examination," he told the reporters when asked about the possible time of submitting the charge sheet.

Nur Mohammad also said further investigation might unearth

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26,000 more fowls
culled in 4 districts

STAR REPORT

A total of 26,159 fowls infected with avian influenza commonly known as bird flu were culled in Savar, Nilphamari, Barisal and Thakurgaon on Friday night and yesterday.

Around 17,000 chickens were annihilated at 10 poultry farms at Savar yesterday following the detection of deadly H5N1 virus in the farms, reported news agency UNB.

With the culling of the fresh ones, a total of 31,000 chickens were culled at Savar in the last two days, Livestock officials said.

After the detection of bird flu in 'Sheela Poultry Farm' at Rajashan, the Livestock officials decided to cull all the chickens of the 14 poultry farms located within the 1-km radius of the farm.

Following the decision, they said, 14,000 fowls of five poultry farms in the area were culled Friday while 15,600 of the rest nine farms yesterday.

Besides, about 1,400 fowls were culled at SS Agro Poultry Farm at Kamalapur village yesterday after the fresh detection of the deadly virus in the farm.

Meanwhile, at least 6,890 bird flu-infected fowls were culled in Nilphamari. Of those, 5,640 were culled at Sanmoy poultry farm while 997 at Alam Poultry farm. 14,347 eggs were also destroyed, reported our Nilphamari correspondent.

Besides, 113 chickens, 15 ducks and 45 pigeons belonged to 45 households were culled as those were infected with the deadly virus.

Sources said several fowls died within a few hours at Sanmoy Poultry farm and Alam Poultry farm in Kukha Para area.

The sample of dead chickens was first sent to a laboratory in Gaibandha and then it was sent to Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI).

Following the BLRI report which mentioned that the fowls were infected with bird flu, a team of livestock officials led by Upazila Nirbahi Officer Khorshed Alam culled the fowls.

Upazila and district livestock officials culled about 1,000 fowls infected with avian influenza in Barisal on Friday night and yesterday, reported our Barisal correspondent.

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BIRD FLU
Poultry industry
losses cross
Tk 4100cr

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The country's poultry industry has incurred a loss of over Tk 4,100 crore over the last one year due to the outbreak of avian influenza, according to a recent study conducted by Bangladesh Poultry Industries Coordination Committee.

"This loss has hit the rural economy which had earlier faced the devastation of cyclone Sidr and twin floods," Dr Jahangir Alam, director general of Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI), told a roundtable yesterday referring to the study.

The coordination committee submitted the study to the government last week. The study covered the period between February 2007 and January 2008.

Alam also called for asked for ensuring bank loans at 2-3 percent interest for poultry farmers.

FULL STORY STAR BUSINESS PAGE 8



The twigs are all that "warn" motorists of the manhole without its lid at Mohakhali in the capital. The manhole in front of the bus terminal has been in this condition for two days.

Hannan Shah
blames EC for
deadlock over
talks with BNP

UNB, Dhaka

BNP chairperson's adviser Brig Gen (ret) Hannan Shah yesterday blamed the Election Commission (EC) for the current deadlock in holding dialogue with BNP by taking a controversial decision on its invitation letter.

"This complex situation would not have been created had the Election Commission sent the invitation letter to BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain timely," he told reporters at his Mohakhali residence.

Hannan Shah hoped that the EC would invite Khaleda Zia-appointed Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain for dialogue as he said the BNP across the country is united under her leadership.

The BNP leader said, "We believe the election is a means to hand that election under any blueprint was never acceptable."

On BNP's unity, Hannan Shah said: "The ball is now in the court of reformists. Unity is possible if they respect chairperson's instructions."

Earlier, Hannan Shah had a meeting with BNP leaders Nazrul Islam Khan, Selima Rahman, Goyeswar Roy and Mohammad Shajahan.



PHOTO: STAR

Sand traders fill up a section of the Turag in Tongji to accommodate their business, significantly narrowing down the river.

BORDERS WITH INDIA, MYANMAR
River erosion eats
into Bangladesh
territory

PINAKI ROY

The country's territory might shrink in future as erosion in the rivers bordering with India and Myanmar is causing loss of land areas.

As Bangladesh is a lower riparian country, in most cases these rivers erode their banks on the Bangladesh side while chars emerge on the other.

According to government accounts, the country has already lost more than 15,000 hectares of land due to erosion caused by 10 common rivers at 29 points with India and one with Myanmar.

Rivers including Dholai and Surma in Sylhet, Mahananda in Chapainawabganj, Muhuri in Feni, Ichhamati and Kalika in Satkhira, Atrai and Punarbhaba in Naogaon, Feni in Khagrachhari and Tombru in Bandarban have been eating into the land mass of the country over the years.

Acknowledging erosion of land

by the common rivers, Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) member Mir Sazzad Hossain, however, said, "The area of the country will not change officially due to this erosion."

When India and Pakistan were separated in 1947, it was settled for rivers in the bordering areas that the mid-current of the rivers would be treated as the border for the two countries.

"But nothing was told in the law about what will happen if rivers erode or change their courses," said a retired official of the Directorate of Land Survey who worked on international border for over a decade.

"When rivers erode land on the Bangladesh side and chars emerge on the Indian side, it creates disputes regarding the border at many places," he said.

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) objected when Bangladesh was trying to protect

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Dr Kamal for
dialogue with
civil society,
professionals

UNB, Dhaka

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said dialogue should be held with civil society, non-communal parties and professional groups apart from the major political parties to bring about qualitative changes in the country through a credible election.

"Dialogue with the civil society is needed to deal with the problems like the price hike of essentials," Dr Kalam told a discussion on "National Unity in the Context of Mohan Ekushey" organised by the party at its Mujibee central office.

Stressing the need for meaningful changes in nomination and election process, Dr Kamal said if

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Hafizuddin fears
movement if 2
ex-premiers not
tried flawlessly

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Former adviser to a caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan yesterday said people would launch united movement in the country if the trial process of the two detained former prime ministers had flaws, imperfection or were influenced.

"People will not accept any influenced or imperfect judgment in the two leaders' [Khaleda and Hasina] trials and certainly demonstrations will be made in the country," said the former adviser observing that there are some flaws in their trial process.

Speaking at the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap held at Hard Point, west bank of Jamuna in Sirajganj, he said the trials of BNP chief Khaleda Zia and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina should be transparent so that none can question the fairness of the trials.

Awami League Organising Secretary Mahmudur Rahman Manna, former chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) Shamshur Rahman Shimul Biswas and lawyer Shamima Yasmin Reema also featured in the Sanglap as panelists.

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Rice, sugar, soya
bean get costlier
in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Prices of rice, sugar and soya bean oil increased in Khulna in last one week.

Prices of different varieties of rice have gone up by Tk 5 to Tk 7 per kilogram.

Yesterday soya bean oil was selling at Tk 115 a litre while sugar for Tk 40 per kg. The price of a five-litre-can soya bean oil of different brands ranged from Tk 535 to Tk 540. Last week the price bracket was Tk 520-Tk 525.

A wholesaler said soya bean oil price would rise further in a week. Retailers complained that wholesalers were hoarding the essential item to make big profits.

As for the rise in rice prices, wholesalers and retailers blamed it on the syndicate of rice-mill owners.

Baby burned
to death

CU CORRESPONDENT

A two-month-old was burnt to death while two of his family were injured in a fire at Ichhanagar under Karnaphuli Police Station in the city early yesterday.

The infant was identified as Motaleb, son of Mujibur Rahman of Chowdhury Bari in the area. The injured were his sister Jannat, 3, and mother Jesmin Akter, 35.

Sources said the fire broke out from the kitchen oven at about

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Prayer Timing		
February 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-03	6-07
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

BSF kills four on
Thakurgaon
Satkhira, borders

STAR REPORT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead four Bangladeshi cattle traders near Rudrapur border in Satkhira district and on Hetagachhi border in Thakurgaon district early yesterday, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources said.

The dead were identified as Amjad Ali, 36, of Rudrapur village and Hasan alias Nafar, 28, of Bhabanipur village in Sharsha upazila of Satkhira, and Afsaruddin, 28, of Barsa village and

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Faruk Hossain, 25, of Kashibari village in Baliadangi upazila of Thakurgaon.

Our Satkhira correspondent reported that Amjad and Nafar were gunned down at border village Tentulata under Swarupnagar Police Station of North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, at around 4:30am. They reached the village along with cattle to back home, according to a message received from across the border.

When contacted, Major Kamrul

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BTTB has
no chairman
for 3 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) is running without a chairman since February 1 as the government is finding it hard to pick a candidate for the post from a pool of three.

Sources said the process should have been completed even before the retirement of last chairman BM Moudud Chowdhury. But since there are different types of shortcomings among the three candidates, the government could not make up its mind about this vital position.

"At one point, the government even thought of deputing an official from the defence and putting

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Try war criminals for
nation's better future

War heroes call at Sylhet reunion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Freedom fighters yesterday renewed their demand for the trial of the war criminals.

A better future cannot be ensured unless the war criminals are tried, said Sector Commanders Forum chief Air Vice Marshal (ret) AK Khandker, Bir Uttam, at a reunion of freedom fighters of sectors-3, 4 and 5 in Sylhet.

He called upon the caretaker government to constitute an enquiry commission to probe war crimes and prepare a list of Al-Badr

and Razakar members and then try them at a special tribunal.

He said Sector Commanders Forum and freedom fighters would raise the issue through a national conference on March 15 in the capital.

The forum of the sector commanders of the Liberation War and Sylhet District Muktiyoddha Sangsad jointly organised the reunion at Government Alia Madrasa ground in the city.

The sector commanders and the attending freedom fighters visited the martyred intellectuals' mass

grave and the Central Shaheed Minar in Sylhet city and placed floral wreaths as their homage to the martyrs of the Language Movement and the Liberation War.

The daylong programme featured a views-exchange discussion with students and a cultural function.

Speakers at the first session of the discussion said a process for the trial of the war criminals and collaborators began after independence, but it was stalled after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

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Democrats focus on
Ohio as Hillary denies
looming defeat

AFP, Washington

US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and her rival, Barack Obama, take their battle to the Midwestern state of Ohio Saturday after the New York senator denied she was contemplating defeat for her White House bid.

Reeling from Obama's 11 straight wins in nominating contests, Senator Clinton rejected the perception that her performance Thursday in a high-stakes debate in Austin, Texas, had a valedictory tone.

"This is going to be a spirited election between now and March

4," Hillary Clinton told supporters at a rally in Dallas, Texas, Friday.

"I am thrilled at the depth and breadth of support I have across the state," she said, knowing that Texas, along with Ohio, makes up a pair of must-win contests for her.

But in the debate the night before, the generous tribute she paid to her rival was seen by some commentators as an admission that her quest to be the first woman president could fall short.

"You know, no matter what happens in this contest -- and I am honoured, I am honoured to be here with Barack Obama. I am absolutely honoured," she said,

and reached out to shake his hand.

While Hillary Clinton was making the case that her campaign was not on its last legs, presumptive Republican nominee John McCain was back in Indiana, attempting to shrug off news reports that connected him to corporate lobbyists and one, in the New York Times, that suggested he had had an improper relationship with a female lobbyist.

Other publications followed up the Times story Friday with accounts of their own of McCain -- who maintains a clean political image -- in close ties with lobbyists.

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PHOTO: STAR

The photo taken yesterday at city's Gulistan shows hawkers occupying a large portion of the pavement putting pedestrians in difficulty.

BIRD FLU
Special teams
start market
monitoring

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Special teams are starting round-the-clock surveillance on the city's 10 biggest poultry markets today to stop sales of sick chickens and enforce other hygiene instructions to stop spreading of avian influenza.

The move came following a report published in The Daily Star yesterday on the sales of sick chickens at some poultry markets.

Each surveillance team comprising a veterinary doctor and two assistants will work primarily at poultry markets at Kaptan Bazar, Karwan Bazar, Mohammadpur, New Market, Palashi, Gulshan and Mohakhali, among others.

"We have taken the 10 poultry markets as models for this round-the-clock surveillance," Dr

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