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AUG 21 ATTACKS CID allowed to quiz ex-OC Rafique

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday allowed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to interrogate AKM Rafiqul Islam, the then officer-in-charge (OC) of Motijheel Police Station, at the jail gate in connection with the case for charging grenades at an Awami League (AL) rally on August 21, 2004.

Rafique, also an accused in a case for killing college student Kamrul Islam Momin on September 13, 2005, was sent to jail on October 16 after he surrendered before the court. He has been in jail custody since then.

Metropolitan Magistrate Ehsanul Haque passed the order after CID Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Fazlul Kabir, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted a petition for interrogating Rafique.

In his petition, the IO mentioned that Rafique should be grilled about the grenade attack on the AL rally for the sake of proper investigation.

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Govt to set up nat'l ID registration authority

Promulgating ordinance for its formation, responsibilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to form a statutory body styled 'National Identities Registration Authority (NIRA)' to give legal coverage to Election Commission's national ID card and voter registration project.

The government is also promulgating an ordinance incorporating NIRA's formation process, its duties for issuing national ID cards, and conviction provision for wrongdoings by citizens in this regard.

The proposed ordinance will empower the home ministry to direct citizens to show their ID cards and submit copies to obtain certain services and facilities as citizens of the country, said law ministry sources.

National ID card will have to be showed or copies be submitted to obtain at least 18 facilities and services from public and private

sector including utility and financial services, and for business, transportation, property, voting right and jobs.

The sources said the draft ordinance would incorporate a special provision to bring the already distributed ID cards under NIRA's jurisdiction.

With the objective of national identities registration, EC would hand over its collected information, data and biometric features to NIRA. The citizens' info and data would be considered as the property of the proposed statutory body, according to the draft.

The law ministry has recently prepared the draft in nine chapters which will be sent to EC soon.

Following approval by EC and then by the advisory council, President Iajuddin Ahmed will promulgate the ordinance, said ministry sources.

The sources said though the commission has launched the project of preparing and issuing national ID cards there is no law in the country in this regard.

As the military-backed caretaker government has initiated formulating a law, in absence of parliament it will be enacted by promulgating 'National Identities Registration Authority Ordinance, 2008'.

After promulgation of the ordinance the government will set up NIRA comprising a chairman and no more than four members through issuing a gazette notification.

The home ministry will appoint chairman and members to NIRA and also fix terms and conditions of their job.

A home ministry official with the rank of joint secretary or above

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BUILDING DESIGN FRAUD Janakantha editor, Rajuk official jailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court for dealing with graft cases yesterday sentenced editor of the daily Janakantha Atiqullah Khan Masud to seven years rigorous imprisonment (RI) on charge of getting approval of a building design from Rajuk through fraud.

Special Court-6 of Tanzeena Ismail delivered the verdict in which Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) official SM Asaduzzaman was also awarded seven years' RI in the case.

In addition, the two were fined Tk 6.03 crore each. They would have to serve an additional year in jail if they fail to pay the amount.

ACC deputy assistant director Mahmud Hasan filed the case with Motijheel Police Station on September 30, 2007 accusing three persons. The name of Akram Hossain, another Rajuk employee, was later dropped in the charge sheet.

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Doctors MU Kabir Chowdhury, left, and ABM Abdullah, centre, talk to journalists after examining Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina at the sub-jail on Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan premises yesterday. DIG (Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui, right, is also seen.

Results of 27th BCS exam stuck in litigations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public Service Commission (PSC) Chairman Dr Saadat Hussain yesterday said it might take a year or more to publish the results of 27th BCS examinations, as dozens of cases regarding the exam are now pending with the court.

"I cannot say when the results of 27th BCS examinations will come out. It will depend on the court ruling," he told journalists after the launching of two policy notes by Institute of Governance Studies of BRAC University at a city hotel.

Some cases will directly affect the PSC, he said, adding that they have already appointed a lawyer to deal with the cases.

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Tk 158.67CR FRAUD ACC permitted to quiz Salman at jail gate

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday allowed the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to interrogate detained Awami League leader Salman F Rahman at the jail gate in connection with the case filed against him for misappropriating Tk 158.67 crore through forged documents.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani passed the order after investigating officer ACC Assistant Director Ashrafur Islam submitted a petition to interrogate Salman.

Beximco Group Chairman Sohail F Rahman and four others were also accused in the case.

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ACC going in EPR mode to cause havoc

Random case filing, losing in litigation are feared to upset economy, let graft suspects off the hook

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Regulatory Reforms Commission (RRC) chairman yesterday said arbitrary filing of corruption case by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) would demoralise the bureaucrats and have negative impact on the economy.

Meanwhile, the Public Service Commission (PSC) chairman said this would create havoc since the

ACC is losing cases in courts which would result in the release of corruption suspects.

"The Anti-corruption Commission would have been in a favourable position if it had dealt its cases under existing laws instead of Emergency Power Rules (EPR)," said Regulatory Reforms Commission (RRC) Chairman Akbar Ali Khan.

The observations came at the

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HASINA KILLING BID Huda, Faruk not produced in court

Charge-framing deferred

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday could not frame charges against Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Faruk Rahman, Maj (retired) Bazul Huda and 13 other people in connection with a case filed for making an attempt on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina's life in August 1989.

Judge Mohammad Israil Hossain at Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 set March 12 as the new date for charge framing after the jail

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Bangladesh transit route for heroin trafficking

Says International Narcotics Control Board

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh has become the prime transit route for trafficking heroin to Europe from South East Asia, according to the latest report from the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).

"There is evidence that heroin consignments destined for Europe are increasingly passing through Bangladesh," states INCB's annual report 2007, that was released worldwide on Wednesday.

"The geographical nature of Bangladesh, in particular its long borders with India and Myanmar,

makes it particularly suitable for heroin trafficking," the report adds.

INCB notes that the most common methods and routes for smuggling heroin into Bangladesh are -- by courier from Pakistan, by commercial vehicles and trains from India and by sea via the Bay of Bengal or overland by truck or public transport from Myanmar.

An independent and quasi-judicial monitoring body which implements UN Drug-related conventions, INCB also blamed a lack of resources and training of law enforcement agencies for Bangladesh's failure to 'properly

implement' its drug control policy.

The report quotes Bangladesh police as saying that the Chittagong seaport is the 'main exit point for drugs leaving the country', while the rest is smuggled out through Sylhet and Chittagong airports.

It also cites press reports of couriers trying to carry heroin to Europe on their way from Pakistan through the Zia International Airport in Dhaka.

The report observed that the use of Bangladeshi courier services for drug trafficking is on the rise,

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PHOTO: STAR

A large trench is dug on Sonargaon Janapath in Uttara in the capital to install sewerage pipes. A railing of rope beside the hole is the only sign of warning to vehicles.

Prof Jahanara, ex-BCL GS Panna submit wealth reports

UNB, Dhaka

Prof Jahanara Begum, adviser to former prime minister Khaleda Zia on primary and mass education, and Ishaq Ali Khan Panna, former Bangladesh Chhatra League general secretary, have submitted their wealth statements to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

In a wealth report submitted to the ACC through her lawyer on Wednesday, Jahanara Begum stated that she has 48.57 acres of land in Rajbari, three bighas in Savar, six bighas in Pirojpur, 70 decimals in Goalanda, Rajbari, 14 decimals in Jessore and over three kathas in the capital's Khilgaon area.

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PPP delays choosing next Pak premier

Discord over frontrunner Fahim

AFP, Islamabad

The party of slain opposition leader Benazir Bhutto delayed nominating Pakistan's next prime minister yesterday, casting the nuclear-armed nation deeper into political limbo after elections.

The Pakistan People's Party, which won the most seats in the February 18 parliamentary polls, failed to agree on a candidate because of discord over the frontrunner Makhdoom Amin Fahim, a stalwart Benazir aide, party officials said.

The delay comes amid mounting uncertainty over how the new premier and his government will handle key US ally President Pervez Musharraf, whose allies were trounced by the PPP and the party of ex-PM Nawaz Sharif.

"It is up to the party leadership what decision they take," Fahim told reporters, flashing a victory sign as he left the meeting of the PPP's newly elected MPs in Islamabad.

Benazir was killed in a suicide attack in the garrison city of Rawalpindi on December 27 and

her widower and successor as party leader, Asif Ali Zardari, has said he is not standing for the premiership. Party insiders said the dispute hinged on the fact that Fahim, the PPP's long-term vice-president, hails from the southern province of Sindh, the Benazir clan's powerbase.

Some party leaders wanted a prime minister from Punjab province, which is home to more than half of the country's 160 million people and where Sharif's party outnumbered the PPP in provincial polls.

Sharif and Zardari have agreed to form a coalition in parliament, which is set to be convened in mid-March, but both parties will inevitably want to maintain their own strength, officials said.

The leading Punjabi contender is Ahmed Mukhtar, an industrialist who is close to Zardari and who defeated the chief of the pro-Musharraf party in the elections, party officials said.

However, insiders said it would be a tough decision to pass over Fahim, a poetry-loving 68-year-old

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Pak army chief vows to stay out of politics

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's army chief yesterday rejected suggestions of any rift between the military and embattled President Pervez Musharraf, and insisted the armed forces would stay out of politics.

Ashfaq Kayani told a gathering of top military commanders in the garrison city of Rawalpindi that the military had no intention of becoming more involved in the

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Bomb kills Lankan Tamil MP

AFP, Colombo

A Sri Lankan Tamil lawmaker and his driver were killed yesterday in a roadside bomb attack that his party and Tamil Tiger rebels said was carried out by government forces.

The vehicle of K Sivanesan, a member of parliament for the pro-rebel Tamil National Alliance (TNA), was hit by a mine in a guerrilla-controlled part of the north of

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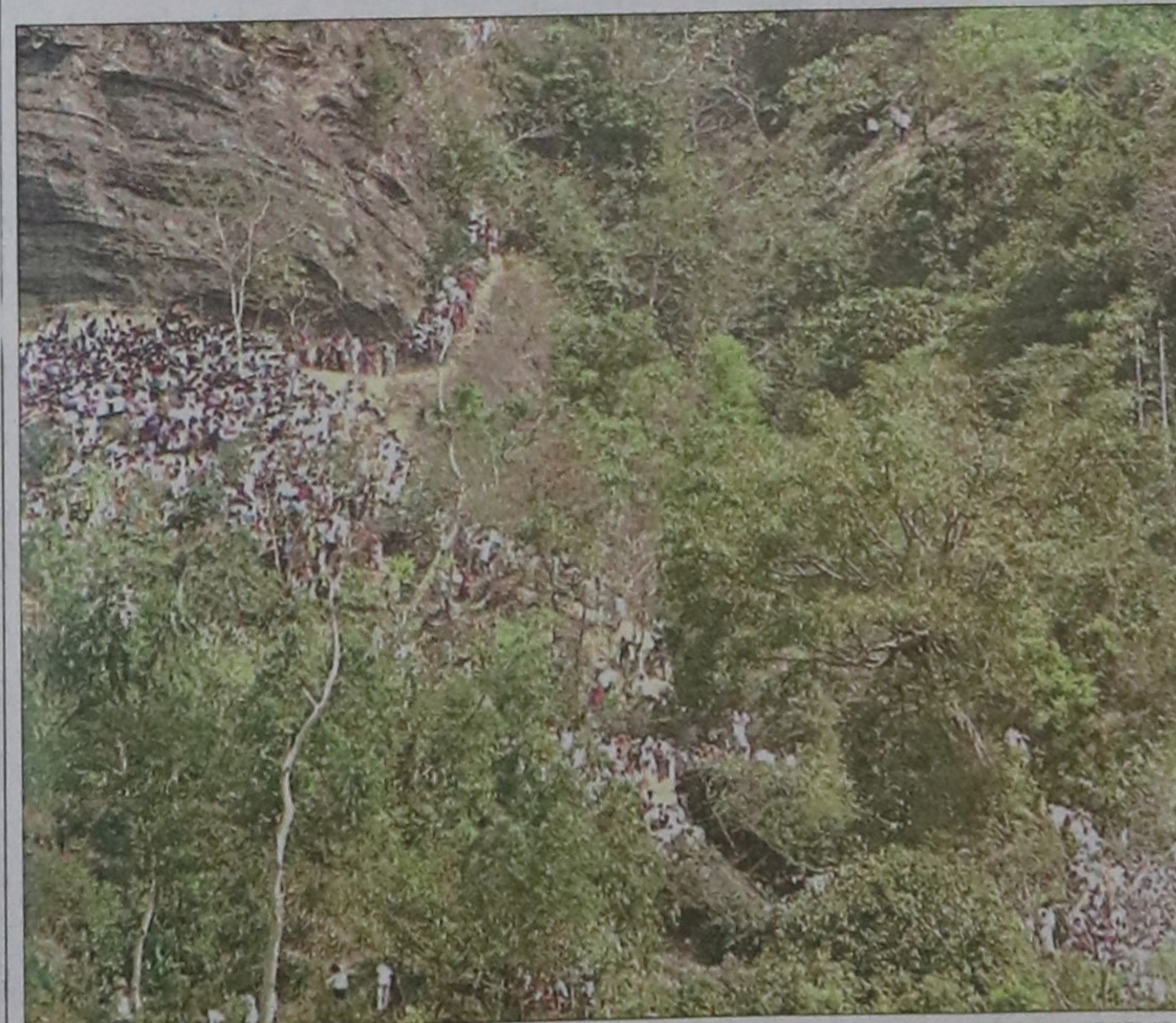


PHOTO: STAR

Thousands of devotees gather at the Adinath Temple, 1,800 feet above sea level, in Sitakunda, Chittagong yesterday to offer puja and visit the Shiv Chaturdashi fair.

BIRD FLU 15,783 more fowls culled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More 15,783 chickens were culled and 19,402 eggs were destroyed in Sylhet, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and Jessore in the last two days.

With the culling, total number of culled chicken reached 1,239,093 while the number of destroyed eggs stands at 1,548,015 in the last 13 months since avian influenza was detected in the country.

About 8,109 chickens were culled and 19,402 eggs were destroyed after bird flu was detected at three farms in Bandar

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Clarification

Former BNP lawmaker Sardar Shakhawat Hossain Bakul in a clarification of a news item titled 'Wealth Report, Wife richer than ex-MP Bakul' published in The Daily Star on March 5 said the information that his wife owns shares worth over Tk 5.29 crore is not correct at all. The actual value of his wife's shares is Tk 52 lakh which was mentioned in the wealth statement.

He also clarified that the information that he owns 18.78 bighas of land in Narsingdi is not correct. He

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