

## AUG 21 ATTACK CASE

# Hearing now on Feb 12

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned the hearing of the August 21, 2004 attack case until February 12 following time petitions by the prosecution lawyers.

Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 Judge Mohammad Masdar Hossain passed the order after the prosecution lawyers submitted petitions saying, witnesses who were earlier summoned, could not appear before the court yesterday.

Earlier on January 27, the court completed recording statement of the complainant Sub-Inspector (SI) Sharif Faruque Ahmed. The court then summoned witnesses -Major (ret) Tareq Ahmed Siddiq and Shoib Ahmed Tariquallah, Maksud Ali, Tutul and Golam Mostafa - to appear before the court to give their statements.

SI Suvas Chandra Sarkar of Khilgaon Police Station yesterday submitted a report to the court saying that witness Maksud Ali is in abroad while Tutul himself received the court summons. But the court adjourned the hearing of the cases twice due to non-appearance of the witnesses.

The court yesterday again summoned Tutul and Golam

Mostafa to appear before it on the scheduled date.

The 22 accused of launching grenade attacks on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue include detained former deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu, Harkatul Ibad chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, Huji members Abu Sayeed, Shahadatullah Jewel, Rafiqul Islam alias Rafiq, Abu Taher and Maulana Tajuddin.

Fourteen of the accused including Pintu and Hannan, now in jail, were produced before the court during yesterday's hearing.

Eight others, including Pintu's younger brother Maulana Tajuddin, have been absconding since the cases were filed.

Senior Assistant Superintendent of Criminal Investigation Department Fazlul Kabir, also the investigation officer of the cases, submitted two charge sheets in connection with the cases to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on June 11 last year showing 412 people as prosecution witnesses.

Advocate Syed Rezaul Rahman, Shah Alam Talukder and Najibullah Hiru appeared for the state.

## JCD fights

**FROM PAGE 16**  
According to the letter, they claimed JCD president Azizul Bari Hellal passed his SSC examination in 1983, senior vice-president Sultan Salahuddin Tuku and general secretary Shaful Bari Babu in 1985 while vice-presidents Jayanta Kuman Kunder, Mostafa Khan Safari, Nurul Islam Nayan, Shahidul Islam Babul, Ekramul Haque Biplob and Azharul Haque and organising secretary Abdur Kader Bhuyian Jewel all did it in 1985-86.

Moreover, most of the central and Dhaka University unit leaders are either married, have jobs or run businesses, which most active leaders dislike as they still get priority in forming committees.

A central committee leader seeking anonymity said it is hard for senior leaders to communicate with junior first-year students due to the age difference, so the time has come to consider imposing age restrictions.

The young leaders proposed forming the committee with leaders who passed their SSC exams in 1990 and also have experience of engaging in politics during the 1996-2001 Awami League reign.

Shaful Bari Babu told The Daily Star, "Experienced leaders are needed to run the party when it is in the opposition and the BNP high-ups would take it into consideration. Experience can minimise the gap between general students and leaders."

However, a Dhaka University unit leader said that the BNP central command should not interfere in the formation of the JCD's committee as it is an associate organisation of the party according to the Representation of the People's Order. Instead, it can only make suggestions.

## US to help

**FROM PAGE 1**  
and her government would not tolerate corruption at any level and would take appropriate measures to strengthen the Anti-Corruption Commission to continue the drive against corruption.

"The ACC is not going to weaken, rather it will be made effective and stronger and so will be the judiciary," Azad quoted the PM as saying during the meet.

Hasina urged the US government to continue with its investigation into corruption by some Bangladeshi citizens, including BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia's younger son Arafat Rahman Koko.

During the one-and-a-half hour long meeting with Boucher who came for a two-day visit in Bangladesh on Saturday, Hasina sought US cooperation in making the country's democracy sustainable and the parliament effective.

"Terrorists have no party, religion or boundary, so we all have to resist them with concerted efforts to establish peace and stability," Hasina told Boucher.

Seeking US cooperation in curbing terrorism and militancy, the prime minister said coordinated effort is a must to tackle the menace.

Referring to the proposed anti-terror taskforce in the South Asia, Hasina told the US assistant secretary that Bangladesh wants to play a major role in curbing terrorism in South Asian nations.

She said Bangladesh wants mutually beneficial good relations among all the South Asian countries in an environ-

## Environment

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The Biman Bangladesh made a profit of Tk 19 crore in fiscal year 2007-08, the minister said, adding that different steps are being carried out to make the national flag carrier more profitable.

Planning Minister AK Khandker, also in-charge of the armed forces division in parliament, told the House that a total of 9,249 members of Bangladesh armed forces are now working under the UN peacekeeping mission and Kuwait mission.

Responding to a query of an AL lawmaker, the minister said a total of 7,968 personnel belong to army while 226 to Navy and 244 to air force. Another 811 personnel of Bangladesh armed forces are working under the Kuwait mission, he added.

"No proposal for sending troops permanently to any country is under consideration of the government," the minister said, adding that troops are sent to a country as part of the UN mission and they stay there for five to eight years.

The state minister for liberation war affairs, AB Tajul Islam, yesterday skipped a question whether any bill will be placed in the parliament to hold trial of war criminals.

In reply to a query, the state minister said that a resolution was unanimously passed in the parliament on January 27 calling upon the government to ensure trial of war criminals of 1971.

## Plight of patients

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Ordeal that Merin had to go through like thousands others who have been lying on the floor since admission.

She was rushed to hospital to measure gravity of and heal her head injury but had to wait for over one and half hours before her brother could manage a place on the floor.

Interestingly, the register of the ward showed that there were 103 patients admitted against its capacity of 40. The lensman, however, could not find rest of the 16 patients in the ward. "They might have been lying anywhere around, either on the floor or on the corridor," chuckled a ward boy.

Thanks to accommodation crisis, mat business has become attractive at DMCH with sellers charging price between Tk 60 and Tk 120 per mat.

## 10 hurt

**FROM PAGE 16**  
SI Sajib to Gazipur Sadar Hospital while the other injured received treatment in local hospitals.

Abdur Rashid, officer-in-charge of Joydevpur Police Station said, "Police opened fire on workers when they tried to snatch away their salary money from the factory authority."

## Jagannath

**FROM PAGE 16**  
They also held a meeting with Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid at his office and submitted a memorandum to him in this regard.

The education minister assured the students of meeting their demands and solving their problems soon.

JNU students brought out the procession from the Central Shaheed Minar at about 11:30 am. Police intercepted the procession at Dowel Chatter on its way to the education ministry at about 12:00 noon. Students then held a rally there.

Speakers at the rally demanded complete withdrawal of cases filed against the students, cancellation of the section 27 (4) of the university ordinance and shifting of the Bangladesh Bank office from the campus.

After the rally a two-member delegation of students went to the ministry to meet the education minister at his office.

At the meeting, the minister assured them of taking immediate steps to meet their demands.

Earlier, the university authorities closed the university for sine die following violent clashes between students and police on Jan 27 over the issue of freeing university dormitories from illegal grabbers.

## 26 DAGs

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Promila Biswas, Karunamoy Chakma, Mustafa Zaman Islam, Mujibur Rahman Mia, Gautam Kumar Roy, Nurul Islam Talukdar, FRM Nazmul Ahsan (Mizan), Shashank Shekhar Sarkar, Bishwajit Roy, Motaher Hossain (Saju), Bishwadev Chatterjee, M A Mannan Mohan, Mohammad Ullah alias Kishu, Md Khasruzzaman, Md Suhrawardy, Bishwajit Debnath, Mohammad Selim, Shahidul Islam, Kazi Mohammad Izarul Haque Akand alias Sagar, KM Jahid Sarwar Kajal and Mosharruf Hossain Sarder.

The number of DAGs now stands at 43.

## Fair premises

**FROM PAGE 16**  
This year, around a hundred stalls were allotted spots on the roadside since ongoing construction work on the academy premises has limited available space for the fair.

Meanwhile, 20 publishers participating in the fair were orally reprimanded by academy authorities yesterday and warned of strict actions against them if they do not stop selling books by other publishers who have already been allotted stalls at the fair, as per the rules.

A mobile surveillance team of the academy has been monitoring different stalls this year to ensure no publishers or stalls violate rules of the fair.

Public relations officer of Bangla Academy Anwar Mushid said at a press conference yesterday that the surveillance would continue throughout the duration of the fair.

Despite it being a working day, the fair enjoyed a large crowd yesterday on the eighth day of the fair. Sales were also good, said stall owners.

A total of 72 new titles arrived at the fair yesterday. These include 13 novels, six story collections, three essay collections, 24 poetry collec-

## Worst Australian

**FROM PAGE 16**  
18 people perished, when a badly burnt man arrived with his infant daughter saying his wife and other child had been killed.

"He was so badly burnt," she told the Melbourne Age's website.

"He had skin hanging off him everywhere and his little girl was burnt, but not as badly as her dad, and he just came down and he said 'Look, I've lost my wife, I've lost my other kid, I just need you to save (my daughter)'."

An AFP photographer who made it into Kinglake described a road strewn with wrecked cars telling of desperate, failed attempts to escape.

The cars appeared to have crashed into each other or into trees as towering flames put an end to their desperate flight from the town.

Some did not even make it onto the road, said Victoria Harvey, a resident waiting at a roadblock to be allowed to return to the site of her destroyed home.

She told reporters of a local businessman who lost two of his children as the family tried to flee.

"He apparently went to put his kids in the car, put them in, turned around to go grab something from the house, then his car was on fire with his kids in it and they burnt," she said.

In Kinglake, scores of homes were levelled along with shops and the school. The smouldering ruins of the town were deserted except for police and forensic experts.

Police Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walsh said there was no doubt that arsonists were behind some of the fires.

"Some of these fires have started in localities that could only be by hand, it could not be natural causes," he said.

Police have warned that arsonists could face murder charges.

The government's Australian Institute of Criminology released a report last week which said half the nation's 20,000 to 30,000 bushfires each year are deliberate.

Meanwhile in Queensland in the northeast of the country, where some towns have been inundated for a week by cyclonic rains, two people

## Reformist Khatami declares bid for Iran presidency

**AFP, Tehran**  
Mohammad Khatami, a bookish cleric who on Sunday announced plans to stand in Iran's presidential election, is a charismatic leader popular among the youth but disliked by the country's hardliners.

With his immaculate clerical robes, neatly trimmed beard and learned rhetoric, the 65-year-old mid-ranking cleric presents a stark contrast to the fiery but also populist incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

During his previous presidential term between 1997 and 2005, Khatami earned the tag "reformist" for several liberal initiatives that continue even now under the government of his hardline successor Ahmadinejad.

The cleric was also the first Iranian head of state to visit western Europe since the revolution, with trips to Italy, Germany and also France, and under his governance Iran also mended fences with its neighbours in the Gulf.

In his previous term newspapers and the media in general flourished, while Iran's relations with the West were less confrontational than they have been under Ahmadinejad.

If he emerges victorious, expectations are that relations between Iran and the West, which have grown frostier in recent years due to Tehran's controversial nuclear programme, could begin to thaw.

## US offers to assist

**FROM PAGE 1**  
involving China and South Korea apparently put the row to an end.

Bangladesh, which formed an experts committee for demarcation of its maritime boundary in line with the UN Law of the Sea, had claimed in December that an Indian survey ship allegedly intruded into Bangladesh's territorial waters.

Boucher appreciated Bangladesh's proposal for South Asian anti-terrorism task force, saying the countries in the region need to cooperate to combat terrorism. "We will extend supports in this regard if the countries want some kind of support from us."

On Mumbai bombings, he said it was a horrible attack and it needs investigation to arrest and punish the terrorist groups responsible. He said Pakistan needs resolute action against terrorism and that they started to see that kind of action so that such an incident does not happen again.

Earlier Boucher held talks with Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and State Minister Hasan Mahmud at the foreign ministry where he said Dhaka and Washington at this point have no active negotiations on Tifa.

Talking to reporters after the talks, he said they did not talk about Tifa during the meeting yesterday.

Elaborating on the US stance on the much-debated Tifa, Boucher said the new administration in Washington wants to look at various trade agreements and negotiations before they get started. "I wouldn't be too much excited about the Framework agreement," he added.

He, however, said Tifa is a simple trade agreement under which both the countries could discuss common issues to boost up trade and investment.

Boucher called his trip a "welcome visit" to explore the areas of cooperation between new governments in Dhaka and Washington headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh and President Barack Obama in the US.

He identified new areas of cooperation like climate change, agriculture and healthcare and gave assurance to continue US support for Bangladesh. Despite global economic trouble, Boucher said the level of US assistance to Bangladesh would be maintained or increased.

Appreciating the December 29 general election, Boucher said the polls set a new standard to the democracy in Bangladesh because of which, he thinks, people have very high expectation to the government.

"It is important to the people of Bangladesh to strengthen democracy and institutions like the Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, Human Rights Commission and the judiciary to protect the democracy and have better election," he said.

He expressed hope that the ruling party and the opposition would work together in parliament and hold healthy debate on national issues of importance.

Boucher, who arrived on Saturday to talk to the new government in Bangladesh, said the US likes to support strengthening democracy,

## Khulna students

**FROM PAGE 16**  
and four trucks and set one of the trucks on fire during the agitation.

Authorities of the institute asked all the students to vacate its hostels by 4:00 pm yesterday but they defied the order until their demand is met.

The injured policemen are Inspector Kamaluddin, S.I. Birendra Nath and constable Shamsul Haq. Fourteen of the injured students were admitted to Khalishpur clinic.

Witnesses said the entire campus and surrounding areas plunged into violence as students rampaged through the streets with hurling stones and brickbats and halted transport services, causing immense sufferings to the people.

The agitated students said they will continue their movement until the demand is met. On the other hand, Acting Principal of KPI Kumaresh Chandra Pal told The Daily Star that the demand of the students has no legal basis and so "there is no question of canceling the new examination rule."

He said a case will be lodged with the police against some unruly students for damaging its properties.

## Printers given

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secondary level classes.

"Non-availability of textbooks has now become a national crisis. We will not tolerate any irregularities and we will take tough legal action against publishers if we find books in any of their storehouses," said Col Reza-nur-Rahman Khan, chief of the task force and additional director general of Rapid Action Battalion.

He said stern action would be taken against publishers for failing to market printed textbooks within 6:00 pm today.

Three monitoring teams of the NCTB will work round the clock to ensure that all publishers get sales permission as soon as they complete printing.

Most publishers have failed to complete their jobs and market the required amount of 78 lakh textbooks by February 7, the deadline set by Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid.

Meanwhile, publishers yesterday said they have printed only 48 lakh textbooks and that five to seven more days are required to ready all 78 lakh textbooks.

## Babar

**FROM PAGE 16**  
By Babar, the HC bench of Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury also directed Babar to submit his medical report to the court on his return from abroad on March 4.

Babar's counsel Barrister Ahsanul Karim yesterday told The Daily Star that the HC passed the order since the tenure of Babar's bail granted by the court in an arms case will expire on March 4.

He said the law enforcers, on December 30 last year, barred Babar from going abroad for medical checkup despite the HC bail order.

Ahsanul Karim also said that the HC bench yesterday rejected the government's petition seeking recall of the HC order granting him bail in the same case.

Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Zahurul Islam Mukul appeared for the government.

## Pranab due today

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Two neighbouring countries since the Sheikh Hasina's government returned to power.

Official sources said Bangladesh wants to discuss all bilateral and long pending issues, particularly removing the huge trade gap with India, while India also has a broad agenda that includes security issues.

India has for long enjoyed water transport facility through Bangladesh territory but road and rail transit have never been in use even though an article in the bilateral trade agreement provided use of their waterways, roadways and railways for commerce between the two countries for passage of goods between two places in one country through the territory of the other.

During the visit, Bangladesh and India are expected to sign two key agreements on bilateral trade and investment promotion and protection. The bilateral trade agreement needs to be signed as the existing three-year agreement expires in March and will be renewed through a fresh accord.

The cabinet approved signing of two trade and economic deals with India Thursday.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan and the Indian external affairs minister will sign the renewal of the three-year trade agreement between India and Bangladesh. It was originally signed on October 4, 1980 and renewed and revised from time to time.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua and the Indian minister will sign the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPA) on behalf of their respective governments.

Officials said the BIPA would be necessary since there is a trend of investment flow from both sides. Indian investors will come to invest in Bangladesh or vice versa. This mutual investment promotion and protection will give the status "most favoured nation" (MFN) to each other.

During his stay, Pranab will hold important meetings with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and some other ministers, including ministers for foreign affairs, home and water resources.

## RU acting VC

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Prof Mammunul, also pro-VC of the university, told The Daily Star that he faxed his resignation letter to the chancellor at 12:30 pm yesterday.

In the letter he informed the chancellor that he could not discharge his duties in the prevailing situation.

He also mentioned that it was very difficult for him to perform as a pro-VC and acting VC.

The pro-Awami League (AL) teachers and Bangladesh Chhatra league (BCL) of RU unit issued a 24-hour ultimatum on Saturday demanding his resignation.

Pro-AL employees, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, JSD-backed Chhatra league and Progressive Students' Alliance also staged separate demonstrations on the campus.

## US to help

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ment of peace, which is impossible without wiping out terrorism.

Hasina pledged to take all-out efforts to curb terrorism. "If terrorism cannot be checked the socio-economic development of the country is impossible," her press secretary quoted her.

The prime minister thanked the US government for providing training to police, RAB and BDR in wiping out terrorism.

Hasina told the senior US official that her government was determined to safeguard human rights and ensure freedom of media and speech.

She also thanked the US government for expanding GSP facilities and urged it to allow duty and quota-free access of Bangladeshi ready-made garments to the US market.

Referring to US president Barack Obama's desire for visiting a Muslim country to earn confidence of the Muslim world, Hasina invited Obama to visit Dhaka first.

Replying to a query, Kalam said there was no discussion on trade and investment framework agreement (TIFA) between the two countries during the meet.

At the beginning of the meeting, Boucher congratulated the premier on her alliance's victory in the December 29 parliamentary elections.

The prime minister also welcomed Boucher to Bangladesh and praised the positive role the US, among other friendly countries, played in the Bangladesh's election.

## Pranab due today

**FROM PAGE 1**  
He will hold official talks with Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at the state guesthouse Meghna on bilateral issues and international issues of common concern.

Diplomatic sources said Pranab is likely to touch on the transit issue during his talks with top government leaders. He is also likely to discuss the maritime boundary issue and security.

Officials at the Indian High Commission, however, said it is Pranab's goodwill visit to Bangladesh and he would not bring an issue like transit at this time.

They said India gives top priority to the security issue and will seek Bangladesh's support in strongly preventing activities of Indian separatist groups.

India is eager to work with the new government to eliminate militancy, terrorism and border crimes, they added.

Official sources said Bangladesh is expecting to ease the irritants with India and settle bilateral issues during Indian external affairs minister's brief visit.

Dhaka is eagerly waiting to welcome Pranab considering the visit as an important move to strengthen relations between the neighbours, sources added.

## Opposition

**FROM PAGE 1**  
opposition lawmakers of bringing changes in the seating arrangement in the next session of parliament.

Joyal Abedin Faruq told The Daily Star last night, "We talked about the issue after the speaker invited me to his office for tea."

Quader said, "The BNP-led opposition lawmakers will sit today again to decide whether we will return to the parliament or to go on an indefinite boycott."

Faruq echoed Quader. Faruq, Salauddin Quader and a number of BNP leaders met the BNP chief at her Gulshan office and evaluated the speaker's initiative.

After a meeting of the BNP parliamentary party on February 5, BNP leader MK Anwar, told reporters that they were ready to return to parliament if the speaker came up with a specific proposal to meet their demand.

For getting three more seats in the front row on the left side of the speaker's podium, the BNP-led opposition lawmakers started boycotting the House proceedings from January 28.

Former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar unilaterally allocated all of 10 seats to his left in the front row for the opposition lawmakers, including one seat for Oli Ahmed, lone lawmaker from Liberal Democratic Party.

Following a demand raised from the treasury bench, newly elected Speaker Abdul Hamid rearranged the seats and allocated four seats in the front row for the opposition MPs, including that for Oli Ahmed.