

## Grenade attack kills two, wounds six in Karachi

AFP, Karachi

A hand grenade attack targeting the office of a political party late Sunday killed at least two people and wounded six others in Pakistan's port city of Karachi, police said.

The attack, which took place in the city's eastern impoverished neighbourhood of Buner town, came a day after two separate bomb explosions in Karachi killed four people and wounded seven others.

"It was a grenade attack that targeted office of Awami National Party (ANP), killing two people and wounding six others," senior local police official Tahir Naveed told AFP.

The ANP is the leading secular party in Pakistan's ethnic Pashtun northwest and has a large vote bank in Karachi.

Another senior police official, Najeeb Khan, confirmed the incident and casualties.

He said two attackers arrived on a motorbike, threw the grenade and fled.

On Saturday a bomb targeting a government official exploded in the Eesa Nagri area, killing a police officer and wounding seven people including the official.

## Govt

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The labour and employment ministry has already requested the Public Service Commission to start recruiting inspectors against the existing 39 vacant posts, said the Bangladesh government's action plan.

Bangladesh has also agreed to create a publicly accessible database of all readymade garment factories as a platform for reporting labour, fire and building inspections.

Regarding information about factories and their locations, violations, fines, sanctions and factory relocations, the plan said such measures would be taken under the Compact agreement, which was signed in Geneva on July 8.

A hotline for fire alert is already in place at the department of fire service and civil defence, it added.

Bangladesh also reformed the labour law on July 15, to address key concerns related to freedom of association and collective bargaining at factories.

Regarding registration of unions, the action plan said "some progress has been made" and that the labour ministry should take care of this matter.

Also to fulfil the US conditions, the home ministry has withdrawn all criminal charges against labour leaders Babul Akter and Kalpana Akter.

Under the conditions, the social welfare ministry may give registration to the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity and allow Social Activities for the Environment to continue its activities.

The home ministry will investigate the murder of labour leader Aminul Islam.

"We have agreed to take the initiatives under the Compact" regarding ensuring the protection of EPZ workers' freedom of association until the EPZ law has been repealed or overhauled, said the plan.

Also, a project is in progress to actively support the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other workers and employers in the shrimp sector.

"We started preparing the action plan after the verdict of the hearing [on June 27]," Commerce Minister GM Quader told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We will publish our final matrix by this week."

The minister said the matrix would be verified periodically to measure the progress of the ministries concerned so that the GSP status could be regained at the earliest.

## CHETIA DEPORTATION

# Dhaka gives no timeframe

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
New Delhi

Bangladesh has asked India to immediately arrest and hand over the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and said there was no timeframe for deporting Anup Chetia, leader of the Indian separatist outfit United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA).

In response, India has assured Bangladesh that it will continue to extend all possible assistance in tracking down the killers and handing them over.

The exchange between the two neighbouring countries was revealed in a joint statement issued yesterday on the outcome of a home secretary-level meeting held in Delhi on Friday.

Risaldar Mosehuddin

and some other killers of Bangabandhu are suspected to be in hiding in India.

"Both sides also agreed to extend cooperation for apprehension of wanted criminals and fugitives," says the statement.

Regarding the deportation of the ULFA leader, who has been in jail for over a decade, Bangladesh Home Secretary C Q K Mustaq Ahmed at a media briefing said his country was working on the issue so that he could join peace talks with the Indian government.

Replying to a question, he told reporters in Delhi that there was no fixed time frame for the deportation of Chetia.

"There is no quid pro quo," Mustaq said when asked whether there was any

give-and-take deal between India and Bangladesh on Chetia's deportation.

Chetia has been in prison in Bangladesh since 1997. India and Bangladesh signed an extradition treaty early this year.

Mustaq and his Indian counterpart, Anil Goswami, at the meeting also discussed the ratification of the Land Boundary Agreement, 1974, and the protocol signed in 2011 and noted that its early ratification "will lay the long pending boundary-related issues at rest", according to the joint statement.

The statement says both sides agreed to increase the frequency of coordinated border patrolling with a view to curbing criminal activities along the border.

## Labour law falls

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restricting the right to strike.

These lapses make the amended law "several important steps" short of being in conformity with ratified international labour standards, the ILO said, and urged the government to address them "as a matter of urgency".

The organisation, however, commended the government for some of the amendments it did make to improve occupational health and safety, brought under the global microscope following the recent events of Rana Plaza collapse and Tazreen fire that killed upwards of 1,200 and fatally wounded thousands.

The provisions in the law that call for creation of safety committees in factories with 50 workers or more and provision of safety equipment were particularly lauded.

The stipulations were also noted that the labour inspectorate examines the health and safety conditions of workplaces and conducts on-the-spot inspections, factories with over 500 employees appoint safety welfare officers and ones

with 5,000 employees establish workplace health centres.

The ILO also hailed the elimination of the previous obligation to send to employers the names of union leaders at the time of registration of a trade union at the factory or federation level.

The provisions that allow workers to call on outside experts for advice during collective bargaining and elect 10 percent of their enterprise officers from outside the workplace were appreciated.

Other amendments that came to the ILO's attention during the initial review are the extension of compensation after 2 years in employment, as opposed to 3 under the previous law, for work-related deaths and the requirement that workplaces of over 500 employers arrange for and cover the cost of treatment of occupational diseases.

"With respect to the areas of progress noted above, implementing regulations will be needed to bring the provisions of the new amendments into practical effect," the ILO said, while

extending its assistance to accelerate the process.

It also offered to work "with urgency" to build the capacity of the labour inspectorate to assume its new responsibilities.

"The ILO is prepared to immediately begin work with the government on the development and adoption of further legislative proposals to address the conclusions and recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies."

The UN agency also called for changes to existing industrial relations regulations that allow employers to conduct the elections for worker participation committees.

Regarding the country's acceptance in the agency's Better Work Programme, it said the Better Work Management Group would review next week the country's eligibility in light of the amendment to the law.

The programme mobilises the tripartite efforts of employers, trade unions and governments to improve productivity, working conditions and rights in the garment sector.

## Journos for arrest

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staff of Independent Television.

At a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club, they also demanded the arrest of Rony's accomplices who along with him beat up reporter Imtiaz Momin and cameraperson Mohsin Mukul at his Tophkhana Road office in the capital on Saturday.

They, at the protest programme, expressed disappointment over the court granting Rony bail.

Criticizing the government and law enforcers for the delay in the trial procedure in connection with the killing of the journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Rumi, the leaders of the journalists' associations also threatened to go for a tougher movement if the arrests were not made within the time.

Describing Saturday's attack as barbarous, Bangladesh Federal Union

of Journalists President Ruhul Amin Gazi said the accused should be brought to justice irrespective of his political affiliation.

"How can a lawmaker attack journalists? The parliamentary membership of the 'black sheep', Rony, should be cancelled," he added.

Terming Rony the enemy of the mass media, Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) President Shahed Chowdhury urged all to refrain from publishing or airing positive reports or programmes on Rony.

"We are demanding Rony's arrest .... A lawmaker who beats up journalists cannot hold the post," he said.

Mahmudur Rahman Khokan, president of DRU multipurpose co-operative society, urged all TV channels not to invite Rony to any talk shows.

"If any television channel invites him anymore, that

will be considered black-listed by the journalist community," he added.

Different journalists' associations, including Dhaka University Journalists' Association, Rajshahi University Journalists' Association and Chandpur Television Reporters' Forum held human chains protesting the attack and demanding punishment for the attackers.

Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner of Ramna Zone Shibli Noman told The Daily Star that Police were gathering video footage, accounts of witnesses and other evidence. No one had been arrested until yesterday evening.

Independent Television reporter Imtiaz said Mukul's health condition was improving at Metropolitan Hospital in the capital's Mohakhali but he still could not walk alone.

## GMG not clearing

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forfeited around \$1 million deposited as security money.

"The ILFC's case is nothing but a breach of contract," he claimed, adding that at the end of the day the court would look into whether the ILFC leased out the aircraft soon after GMG had returned the plane.

If the ILFC leased out the aircraft to another airline, their claim for damages would be futile, Shahab added.

Sources said GMG had leased a Boeing 767 in 2010 from ILFC for six years. But it informed the ILFC in February 2012 that it wanted to terminate the lease agreement, as it was unable to make the payments.

The ILFC agreed on the termination of the deal only after an assurance from

GMG that it would pay the full amount as per the lease agreement. GMG did not pay up, sources said.

Meanwhile, Shahab said they were now seeking to renew the Air Operating Certificate (AOC) so that they could resume commercial operation. "We are trying to reach an agreement with Caab to this effect."

He hoped the airline's operation would resume by December this year. "We are in talks with two investors, a Canadian and a Middle-eastern company."

He, however, did not disclose the investors' names.

"We have also filed a petition with the High Court against a ministry decision of curtailing 14 frequencies that were given to us," Shahab added.

An official at GMG

claimed that the money they owed to the Caab had started piling up from 2010 as the operation cost soared.

GMG started its commercial operation in 1998. After the global economic meltdown in 2007, and the price hike of jet fuel in the international market, the carrier started feeling the pinch.

Industrial conglomerate Beximco Group bought lion's share of GMG in 2009.

In 2010, the airline raised Tk 300 crore through private placement as a primary step to go for the initial public offering (IPO) using the "book building" method. The method uses bidding for fixing the price of shares.

After a share market debacle in January, 2011, the government suspended the "book building" method, thwarting GMG's plans to go for IPO.

## Now BNP goes

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"If we are voted to power, we will try to show respect to the opposition parties and inculcate tolerance, decency and other democratic norms in the political culture," said Moudud Ahmed, a member of BNP standing committee.

Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain, another member of the committee, said if BNP emerges victorious in the next national election, it will discard the politics of vengeance that the present government continues to subscribe to.

"We will free the administration from corruption and partisan politics," he said.

The issue came to the fore after BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia announced on Thursday that if her party is voted to power, it will set up a new form of government.

Referring to Khaleda's remarks, BNP leader Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman said this will be the spirit of BNP's electoral manifesto for the upcoming parliamentary polls.

On Thursday, the BNP chief said, "We will form a new type of government in the future. We will not compromise on crimes and corruption."

In reaction to the BNP chief's statement, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the next day that Khaleda would introduce "a new style of corruption" if BNP was voted to power.

"She [Khaleda] will open a 'Notun Bhaban' and jeopardise the country's independence and sovereignty," said Hasina.

Some ministers and ruling alliance leaders also echoed the prime minister's view.

BNP policymakers hinted that the party may launch a campaign in line with the BNP chief's pledges to counter the ruling party's criticism.

"We will speak more of positive politics in response to the government's criticism against us," said Mahbub.

When his attention was drawn to the AL's 2008 election pledge to change the confrontational political culture, Moudud said, "Awami League failed to deliver on its promises. But if we win, we will be positive. We will make sacrifices needed to bring about the desired changes."

He said they will take effective measures to bring an end to the culture of parliament boycott that got worse with BNP boycotting most of the sittings of the current parliament.

Wishing anonymity, another BNP policymaker, however, said there was doubt whether it would be possible to bring any change in the system of governance, as the party made big promises in the past, but forgot them all once it assumed power.

The BNP leader also said all these things would depend on the BNP chief and her elder son Tarique Rahman, senior vice chairman of the party.

The BNP policymakers said they were uncertain whether the next parliamentary election will be held in time.

The party is now making preparations to intensify street agitation after the Eid to force the government to agree to holding the election under a non-partisan poll-time government.

## Russia discussing giving loan to Damascus: Syria

AFP, Moscow

Russia is discussing extending a loan to Damascus to help its war-battered economy and is still committed to delivering S-300 missiles in defiance of the West, a top Syrian official said yesterday.

Visiting Syrian Deputy Prime Minister Qadri Jamil said after meeting Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow that the issue of a Russian credit was discussed at the talks and Damascus hoped for an agreement by the end of the year.

"We discussed it, although it is still early to talk of concrete figures," Jamil said, quoted by Russian news agencies. "We hope that the question will be solved by the end of the year, experts are now discussing it."

# Absence of defence delays

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sixth prosecution witness in the case against Mobarak as the defence didn't appear before the court in time.

The tribunal also fixed July 28 for examination of the next prosecution witness.

On the other side, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 had to adjourn the proceedings against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Yusuf due to absence of his chief counsel Abdur Razzaq.

Besides, the tribunal-2 had to adjourn the case proceedings against Chowdhury Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman Khan due to technical glitches.

**MOBARAK'S CASE**  
The tribunal-1 yesterday sat around 10:45am and found defence counsel Ahsanul Huq Hena was absent.

Hena entered the courtroom keeping the three judges, who are also sitting judges of the country's apex court, waiting for about half an hour.

At 11:17am, the tribunal passed the order closing the cross-examination of the witness. In its order the tribunal said the day was fixed for cross-examination of the witness, but Hena had neither appeared nor informed the tribunal about his delay.

The tribunal found Hena's conduct unsatisfactory and acted accordingly.

As the tribunal was passing the order, Hena and his junior Huzzatul Islam Khan entered the courtroom hastily. He appealed to the tribunal to give him a chance for quizzing the witness in vain.

Justice Jahangir Hossain in his observation said, "It

is a very unfortunate. Some will be home, some will be on the way; isn't there any decorum of the court?"

Sixth prosecution witness Abdul Malek testified against Mobarak, alleged former Razakar commander from Brahmanbaria, on July 16.

**YUSUF'S CASE**  
Yesterday was fixed for hearing a discharge and a bail petition filed by Jamaat leader Yusuf, who is historically known as the founder of infamous Razakar force in 1971.

But the defence sought an adjournment until 2:00pm as their chief Abdur Razzaq, who was expected to move the petitions, was busy at the Appellate Division.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan adjourned the proceedings until 1:00pm.

The defence however informed the tribunal later that Razzaq would not be available and the court adjourned the proceedings until tomorrow.

On Thursday, the tribunal adjourned Yusuf's case until yesterday following a defence petition as Razzaq could not appear before the court apparently because of the Jamaat-enforced hartal.

**MUEEN AND ASHRAF'S CASE**

Yesterday was also fixed for recording cross-examination of Shumon Zahid, son of martyred journalist Selina Parvin and third prosecution witness in Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman's case.

Everyone concerned was present at the courtroom, but there was some prob-

lem in the computer.

"There are some problems in the motherboard of the computer. It would take two to three hours to reset it. So, the case proceeding [against Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman] is adjourned until tomorrow [Tuesday]," said Justice Hassan.

A tribunal official keeps records of the testimony and cross-examination of the witnesses in the computer. Three monitors are set before the judges and one each before the prosecution, the defence and the accused to observe what is being typed out.

**QAISAR'S CASE**  
The tribunal yesterday directed the jail authorities to submit a report on the health of war crimes suspect Syed Mohammad Qaisar by July 30.

The court gave the instruction after hearing a bail petition filed by detained Qaisar, an alleged Peace Committee leader of Habiganj and a former state minister in military dictator HM Ershad's cabinet.

Defence counsel Abdus Sobhan Tarafder sought his bail, while prosecutor Rana Dasgupta vehemently opposed the petition.

The court fixed July 30 for passing an order.

**NIZAMI'S CASE**

Defence counsel Mizanul Islam yesterday completed cross-examination of the 14th prosecution witness who gave deposition against Jamaat Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami on Sunday.

The tribunal-1 adjourned the proceeding of the case until tomorrow.

## Three-day DC conference

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has been running mobile courts according to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). They now want more empowerment for increased effectiveness, said Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Mosharrif Hossain Bhuiyan yesterday.

The district administration does not have the authority to revise or appeal against a mobile court's verdict. Therefore, it often faces problems in conducting them, said an additional

secretary, requesting anonymity.

The conference would discuss 242 issues, including land management, law and order situation, empowerment of rural and urban groups, job creation at local level, education rate and price rise, Mosharrif told a press briefing at his Secretariat office.

"A total of 20 sessions on 40 ministries will be held during the annual conference," he said.

Ministers, state ministers, advisers, secretaries of

the ministries and divisional commissioners of the seven divisions will be present.

In the last conference, 533 decisions were taken, and 91.18 percent of them were implemented successfully, Mosharrif observed.

He added that the number of items to be discussed was little compared to that last year. Today's DC conference is the last of the government, with about six months left of its tenure.

## Councillors' debts

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For example, Nurul Islam, councillor of general ward no 46, has debts of over Tk 6 crore while he has declared assets to the tune of over Tk 1 crore, he said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nurul Islam admitted that he along with his family members had more assets than that mentioned in the affidavit.

But he denied having a debt of over Tk 6 crore, saying, "In the affidavit, I have shown that the total investment in my business is worth over Tk 6 crore, in which I have bank loan of over Tk 2 crore.

"The rest of the money came from my own funds, friends and relatives."

Similarly, Asadur Rahman Kiron, councillor of ward no 43, has debts of over Tk 5 crore against his declared assets worth over Tk 2.34 crore, Badiul Alam said.

Contacted, Kiron said he could not talk about the details of his assets and debts without seeing the affidavit.

The Shujan report was prepared on the basis of information provided by the candidates in their affidavits before the city corporation election.

It featured information on educational qualification, cases, tax payment, political and professional background of the elected representatives.

A total of 77 representatives -- one mayor, 57 general ward councillors and 19 councillors for women reserved seats -- were elected in the Gazipur city polls held on July 6.

According to the report,

the pro-BNP people's representatives in Gazipur city are bearing the burden of more cases compared to the pro-Awami League (AL) representatives.

A total of 17 general ward councillors are facing cases. Among those, 12 are pro-BNP men, four are pro-AL men and the remaining one is an independent candidate.

Besides, mayor-elect MA Mannan, who is also an adviser to the BNP chairperson, is currently facing two cases.

It seemed that filing of cases against any political activist was related to assuming state power, Badiul Alam said, adding,

"No councillor elected in the reserved seats for women is facing cases."

Among the general ward councillors, only 13 pay taxes while none of the councillors elected in the reserved seats for women pay taxes.

About political affiliations, the report said, more than half of the general ward councillors are pro-AL. Among the 77 representatives, 27 could not pass SSC while 60 are businessmen by profession.

Shujan Executive Member Zafrullah Chowdhury, among others, also attended the function.

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