

Tuesday's massacre near Jammu

Indian Parliament blames Pakistan, mum on action

Six killed in mortar firing across border

KASHMIR, New Delhi

India's lower house of Parliament unanimously condemned Pakistan yesterday, accusing it of being behind a series of terrorist attacks on its soil. However, the government stopped short of threatening to attack its nuclear-armed rival despite loud and angry calls from lawmakers during a marathon debate.

"The House ... resolves to fight against such senseless acts of terrorism which are against humanity as a whole, in a united and determined manner, and declares the nation's commitment to see an end to this menace," the resolution read.

Lal Krishna Advani, the powerful interior minister, was interrupted several times by lawmakers as he made the closing statement, in which he was expected to detail India's response to the latest attack.

"Why don't you attack Pakistan? Otherwise bodies will keep falling," a

lawmaker shouted across the hall.

"Why do you wait for them to kill our people?" another lawmaker said.

Advani declined to give an immediate commitment on what the government planned to do, saying such announcements were not made in the Parliament, and that officials from the army and other security agencies were being consulted.

"Words are loud, but actions speak louder still," said Sonia Gandhi, leader of the opposition Congress party, to loud applause as she opened a debate in India's Parliament.

India blames Pakistan for a suicide assault Tuesday by suspected Islamic militants against an army base in Kashmir. Thirty-four people were killed, mostly civilians, in the deadliest such attack in the disputed

H i m a l a y a n a n d

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Mullah Omar threatens US, says Laden still alive

AFP, Dubai

The supreme leader of Afghanistan's defeated Taliban militia has warned the United States that "fire will engulf the White House" and said that suspected terror mastermind Osama bin Laden was still alive, a newspaper reported yesterday.

"The battle (in Afghanistan) has (just) started, its fire has been kindled and it will engulf the White House, seat of injustice and tyranny," Mullah Mohammad Omar was quoted as saying by the Saudi pan-Arab daily Asharq Al-Awsat.

As to bin Laden, whose al-Qaida network is accused by the United States of carrying out the September 11 terror attacks, "Sheikh Osama is, thanks be to God, still alive, to the horror of (US President George W.) Bush," Omar said.

Bush "is promising his people to kill Osama, unaware of the fact that it is God the Almighty who gives life or takes it away," he said.

Asharq Al-Awsat said Omar, who has eluded US forces since the fall of the Taliban's last bastion of Kandahar last year, was hiding in the mountains of Afghanistan and had answered its questions, submitted in writing, via his information adviser.

The paper said it had ascertained that the interview, the first with Omar since the US-led war on Afghanistan ended five years of Taliban rule, "was conducted in accordance with the professional standards it adheres to."

"We do not consider the battle to have ended in Afghanistan, or even in Palestine or other Muslim lands ... (The United States) launched a war against Islam and Muslims without

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Two held for extortion in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Two young men allegedly belonging to the ruling BNP were arrested on charge of extortion in East Indira area of Narayanganj town on Thursday night.

Sources said two BNP cadres -- Alam and Suman -- went to the residence of businessman Shahjahan at around 10 pm and demanded Tk 50 thousand from him.

Hearing the news, local people rushed to the spot and chased the two. They caught Alam and Suman and later handed them over to police.

Fatullah thana police lodged a case.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 18		6-35 pm
May 19	5-14 am	

Prayer Timings		
May 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-40	6-44
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Vendors with basketfuls of mango have moved to the Osmany Udyan in the city after police evicted them from the streets.

14 most wanted criminals have fled country

DMP Commissioner discloses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Qayyum yesterday said 14 out of the 23 most wanted criminals have fled the country and one of them is in jail.

The rest eight most wanted criminals have gone into hiding inside the country and they sometimes appear in different parts of the city, the commissioner told a group of reporters of different dailies at his office yesterday evening.

He admitted that the city cops do not have the upper hand in the

situation for lack of sufficient information about the most wanted criminals and their whereabouts.

The commissioner however expressed his firm conviction to contain the crime wave for improving the overall law and order situation in the capital, adding, "everyone has a role to play in containing the soaring crime."

Commissioner Qayyum said that a total of 29 temporary anti-crime checkpoints have been set up in the city to check vehicles in a bid to restrict movements of criminals, mostly muggers. The inspections

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Directive to curb highway robbery

BSS, Dhaka

An emergency meeting on preventing highway crimes like dacoity, robbery, mugging and hijacking and ensuring smooth movement of vehicles was held at the police headquarters in Dhaka yesterday.

Home Minister Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury was present in the meeting chaired by the Inspector General of Police. It was attended, among others, by deputy inspector generals (DIG) of different ranges and district superintendents of police (SPs).

DIGs and SPs informed the home minister and IGP of the measures taken to check hijacking of rice-loaded trucks in their respective zones.

The IGP also instructed DIGs and SPs to ensure regular highway

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

As water crisis persists in many areas of the city, army personnel are seen distributing water among slum dwellers near FDC.

A S M NURUNNABI

Like city's kitchen markets, its wholesale markets also present depressing scenes. During the last decade or so, there has been a large-scale expansion of the city in keeping with its growing population. But this increase has not been reflected in the number of wholesale markets which has almost remained the same. These wholesale markets supply various consumer items to the large number of retail markets which keep growing all the time. The wholesale markets represent the commercial heart of the metropolis, so far as mainly consumer items are concerned.

Such main centres for supply of rice, pulses, vegetables, fruits, medicines, etc. have had limited expansion over the years although the wholesale deals in such commodities have ramifications involving turnovers amounting to crores of taka.

The city's Badamtoli Bazar is one of the well-known wholesale trading centres of the country. Businessmen at this centre invest crores of taka in trading various commodities. The main character-

DOWN TO EARTH

Squalid conditions of city's wholesale markets

istic of business at this centre is future trading, which means trading by making investments one year in advance on the basis of pre-determined price of a commodity. In this kind of trading, three parties are involved -- the growers, the local traders acting as middlemen and the whole-sale businessmen based at Badamtoli. Such trading by advance investments mainly covers such commodities as rice, pulses, and fruits of various kinds as available during different seasons.

From economic and social points of view, this trading centre has great importance. Total transactions at this centre are said to be worth more than Tk 10 lakh a day. About one lakh families are said to

depend for their livelihood on trading at this centre.

Since the trading centre is located near the Buriganga river, most of the goods transported here are by boats and trawlers. Use of the land route by means of trucks is also substantial.

The total environment of this trading centre is far from satisfactory. The main problem is congestion. The entry and exit points of this trading centre remain highly congested and during rains get very difficult to pass through.

Another important wholesale market for vegetables of all kinds is located at Kawranbazar, which serves as an outlet for other city bazars. The overall environmental

situation at this wholesale vegetable market is very deplorable. Most of the stalls are positioned in dingy surroundings. All around the area, there is filth with little or no efforts for improvement. The situation here looks all the more galling in contrast to the nearby high-rise office blocks and a five-star hotel.

The squalid condition of Kawranbazar wholesale vegetable market is heightened by the existence of a big wholesale fish market nearby where a large number of retailers throng for obtaining supplies for different city markets.

Another wholesale fish market is located at Swarighat by the Buriganga in the old part of Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Night guard of brickfield shot dead in Rupsha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Mominuddin, 55, night guard of Kazi brick field at Nandanpur village in Rupsha upazilla was gunned down by unidentified assailants at midnight on Thursday.

Police said a gang of miscreants called Momin out of the brick field near Altharobanki river and shot him point blank. He died on the spot.

Police recovered the body yesterday morning and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police could not unearth the reason behind the murder till yesterday noon.

According to some villagers, Momin was a police informer who recently helped arrest some members of Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) in Rupsha upazilla.

No case was filed in connection with the killing.

Vit D crucial in preventing colon cancer

XINHUA, Washington

Vitamin D may help protect against colon cancer by detoxifying cancer-triggering chemicals that are released during the digestion of high-fat foods, a new US study suggests.

"Our findings suggest a new look at the relationship between nutrition and cancer, particularly how vitamin D protects against colon cancer," David Mangelsdorf at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute said Thursday in a statement.

Mangelsdorf and colleagues found that Vitamin D can bind to a receptor on intestinal cells that also binds to a bile acid called LCA.

Increased LCA is associated with a high fat diet, and the acid is poorly reabsorbed in the liver. It therefore passes into the colon, where it can damage cells' DNA, making them cancerous.

Their study, to appear in the journal Science, showed that once activated, the Vitamin D receptor induces the production of an enzyme which breaks down LCA in the liver and intestine.

Vitamin D receptor may not get activated properly in people whose high fat diets cause the overproduction of LCA, or in those with Vitamin D-deficient diets, the researchers said, suggesting that a drug acting like vitamin D might help prevent colon cancer by turning on the Vitamin D receptor.

However, they cautioned that high intake of vitamin D or drugs that mimic vitamin D may lead to dangerous levels of calcium in the blood.

So, the best way to prevent colon cancer is to eat less fat, the researchers said.

Two arrested with arms at Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Two persons were arrested with arms and ammunition in the city yesterday morning.

The arrested persons are Mobakker Hossain, 24, and Asgar Ali, 25.

Boalia police arrested the two from a Dhaka bound coach from Chapainawabganj and recovered one foreign-made revolver, one pistol and six bullets from their possession. A case was filed in this connection.

Cracks at many points of Tamabil-Jafflong highway

Massive irregularities alleged in project completed about a month ago

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Cracks have developed at many points of the 60-kilometre Sylhet-Tamabil-Jafflong highway, completed early this month.

At some points, sides of the metalled highway have eroded.

Massive irregularities have been alleged in construction of the highway, costing over Tk 125 crore.

Work on the project began in 1999 with assistance from Kuwaiti Fund for International Development (KFID). The road is to be connected with the proposed

Asian Highway.

A written complaint of the people of the region has already been sent to the communication minister, sources said. The allegations include use of low quality construction materials and violation of terms in the tender.

Protesting the alleged irregularities and demanding probe into the matter, the Jaintia Janakalyan Federation announced a fortnight long agitation programme including holding of rallies at different places. Fresh programmes will be announced at a rally at Jaintapur on May 29, leaders of the organi-

sation said at a press conference at Sylhet Press Club on Tuesday.

Indian construction firm IRCON and a Bangladesh-Singapore joint venture firm MONICO constructed the highway.

It is alleged that substandard and cheaper construction materials were randomly used. Bitumen, bricks and stones were not used as specified.

In the complaint, the local people also demanded a high level inquiry into the matter and punishment of persons responsible.

When contacted, Faruque Hossain, Superintending Engineer of Roads & Highways (R&H) Department who was the project director said, "So far I know, there was no irregularity. But, there can be an inquiry, if there is allegation."

He said the problems might have been caused due to soil condition. "We have already detected 15 spots and started taking measures. As the work has just been completed, the one-year time for 'defect liability' has started. After expiry of this period, the road will be handed over to the R&H Department."

"The construction companies will be given back their security money after proper testing of the road. Everything has been done as per international standard through an international tender", he claimed.

On the other hand, as a portion of the sanctioned amount has been saved, work on construction of the proposed Sylhet bypass road and Shahjalal Bridge-II may be taken up soon as an extension of the project, the official said.

Sources said the bypass road will cost Tk 42 crore and the bridge Tk 33 crore.

The proposed bridge will be constructed at Kushighat.



PHOTO: IQBAL SIDDIQUEE

Erosion at a point of Sylhet-Tamabil-Jafflong highway, completed early this month.

CCCI-CMP meeting told Political shelter to criminals must be stopped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Most of the criminal activities in the port city are carried out under political shelter and this has to be stopped for improvement in law and order.

This was noted at a meeting on law and order between the Chittagong Metropolitan Police and business community leaders, held at the office of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) on Thursday.

The business leaders said, to improve the law and order, all political parties should reach a consensus that they will not shelter criminals.

Besides action against them, there should be a campaign to

isolate and disgrace criminals socially, they said.

Addressing the meeting, CCCI President Farid Ahmed Chowdhury said investment and all other economic activities are suffering due to the present law and order situation.

He said the police force in the city should be more active before the situation goes beyond control.

CMP Commissioner Md Shahidullah Khan assured of continued efforts by police to nab criminals.

Giving statistics, the CMP Commissioner said the situation in the port city is better than in other cities.

He said 600 out of 900 listed criminals and 63 out of 70 notorious

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

3 govt officials assaulted allegedly by BNP men in Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat

Three government officials were assaulted yesterday allegedly by some ruling party men at a shrimp gher (enclosure) at Kumargari in Kachua upazila of the district.

The BNP-backed people, who occupied the gher by ousting its owner Sheikh Abdur Rab, forced the officials to leave the place.

The incident took place when Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Kachua, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of local thana and upazila fisheries officer went to the gher for investigation into the matter at the directive of the Deputy Commissioner.

UNO Nurul Alam filed a general diary (GD) with Kachua thana following the incident.

Earlier, the DC asked the three officials to investigate the matter when Sheikh Abdur Rab filed an appeal with the administration to restore his rights on the gher.