

Police stayed inactive

FROM PAGE 1 Commissioner and General Secretary of district BNP Ariful Haq admitted getting such warnings from police.

"After the January 12 bomb blast, a top police official asked me over phone to move carefully," the mayor said. "But I did not take it seriously, thinking they did it just as others do so after an incident."

He went on, "Now that I was the target of an attack, I have reasons to believe police got indications of such motives during the shrine blast investigation."

Ariful Haq Chowdhury said, "Some police officials told me not to attend any meetings at the dead of night and to inform police before going to any public gathering. But it was nothing official."

Ariful added, "So far as I know, police asked almost all the city ward commissioners to move cautiously." The five-member police team that probed the January 12 blast informed the home ministry and police headquarters about some people it suspected to be involved in the incident, but no step was taken later, a police source said.

The 50-page report was not made public.

Declining to give the identity of the suspected people, the source said, "The government probably did not take any step nor disclose the probe report because it was a sensitive incident."

Although the probe report did not hint further bomb attacks in Sylhet, local police guessed some key figures might be targeted and warned them unofficially, the source said. "Verbal warning was given as there were problems in giving official warning."

The DIG said, "Action cannot be taken against anyone on the basis of

Father of ward commissioner files GD against MK Anwar

UNB, Dhaka

Father of a BNP ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation has filed a general diary (GD) with police against Agriculture Minister MK Anwar and his son Mahmud Anwar Kaiser.

"My father has filed GD against MK Anwar and his son as they resorted to repression on the people of Homna in Comilla and filed a number of false cases against us," Commissioner ABM Enamul Haque Quayum said yesterday.

BM Wadudul Haque, father of the commissioner of ward no 25, has filed the GD with Khilgaon Police Station.

MK Anwar is MP from the Homna constituency and commissioner Quayum also hails from the same area of Comilla district.

However, the minister could not be contacted for his comment, as one of his personal aides said he was busy looking after flood victims in his constituency.

Commissioner Qayum told the news agency that he also submitted allegation to the Prime Minister's office with evidences of activities of the minister and his son.

His father, BM Wadud, stated in the GD that Anwar and his son filed at least 200 "false cases" against his sons and people of Homna-Megna area.

Even they gave "threat" to his son, who is discharging his duties as a commissioner, he alleged in the GD.

"As a father, I lodged the GD seeking life security of my sons and free and neutral investigation into the cases," Wadud stated.

The complainant further alleged the minister's son regularly collects toll from various sources in the Homna-Megna area.

When contacted, Khilgaon police said that they were investigating the allegation.

Dhaka disagrees

FROM PAGE 1 reports on human trafficking in previous years, but were put up to tier 2 after a year."

Reaz Rahman, adviser to the government on foreign affairs, told reporters that Dhaka has explained its difficulties in stemming the flow of human trafficking to the visiting US team, but also maintained that the government is very determined to make every possible effort to meet the challenge.

"We'd continue the process as part of our commitment to the people, not merely to graduate to tier 2 of a particular report," said Morshed.

The continuation of Bangladesh in tier-3, Rahman said, would project a negative image of the country and might even deter possible General System of Preference facility as well as military assistance.

Withdrawal of non-humanitarian and non-trade US assistance could follow, if the visiting US team judge Bangladesh to have made inadequate efforts in improving the human-trafficking situation.

No country, however, has ever been slapped with such sanctions by the US for being marked as tier-3

the probe report as it did not identify anyone."

Meanwhile, local people are panicked by repeated bomb blasts causing deaths and injuries and fear recurrence of such incidents.

"In view of the prevailing situation, we can take it for granted that no probes into these incidents are going on," said an aggrieved mayor. "And if probes are on, the government does not want to disclose their outcome."

BNP leader Ariful Haq urged all irrespective of their political identity to help track down the culprits behind the bomb attacks and not to blame anyone without proof. "It seems an organised gang is carrying out the attacks," he said.

Besides the shrine blast, a grenade attack was made on Bangladesh-born British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury that left him injured. Three people were killed and more than 70 injured in the incident. Unidentified elements blasted bombs at two cinema halls and planted bombs in another cinema in the city on Thursday last. The explosion at the AL meeting on Saturday took place only 47 hours later. The mayor reportedly was the target of the attack.

Top outlaw

FROM PAGE 12

said. He received bullets on his right knee, he said.

According to police sources, Parimal had been wanted for as many as 15 criminal cases including murder, abduction, rape, extortion and robbery with different police stations in Barisal, Pirojpur and Jhalakati districts.

Damage repair

FROM PAGE 12

"Foreign assistance is required to rebuild the infrastructures as the current floods caused heavy damage, particularly to physical infrastructure," she said.

Addressing briefly the public gatherings at Doleshar College, Hasnabad, Par Ganderia, Mandail Maternity, Kalindi and west side of the second Buriganga Bridge, the prime minister said she came to tell the flood victims that they should not feel helpless they are not alone at this juncture.

"BNP and the government are with you...I have come to see your sufferings and extend help," she told the affected people.

The prime minister claimed that there had not been any scandal or corruption at any place centring relief operation-relief goods were being supplied to each and every flood-stricken person across the country.

She also assured the flood-hit people of cash assistance for rebuilding of their houses.

The prime minister thanked various organisations and affluent people of the society for donating to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. She hoped more well-off people would come up in aid of the flood-affected people.

Local MP and State Minister for Labour and Employment Amanullah Aham also addressed the gatherings.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury and BNP women's wing leader Bilkis Islam accompanied the prime minister.

High alert

FROM PAGE 1

and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin visited Zia and inspected the special security arrangement in the wake of the threat. The intelligence agencies are now trying to trace the caller.

Over 1,000 security forces, including 500 officials of the air force, army, Rab and police, searched Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong after the bomb scare spread.

Five flights of Biman, GMG Airlines and Phuket Air took off amid tight security.

Khulna bigots

FROM PAGE 1

demand they will press for.

Laying siege to Kadiani mosque at Nirala Residential Area will follow the rally slated for Friday after jum'a prayers.

Mohammad Salah, ameer of IKNMB's Khulna unit in a press conference announced the programme yesterday.

Speaking at the press conference Saleh said the holy Quran does not entitle Ahmadiyyas to enter the holy Makkah and Medina, wed any Muslim girl and be buried in any Muslim graveyard.

4 killed in 24 hrs in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Four people, including a Jubo Dal leader, were murdered in separate incidents in Barisal within a span of 12 hours.

The victims are Helal Molla, 26, organising secretary of Jubo Dal Chandshi Union unit under Gournadi upazila, Mafuza Khanam, 23, of Chandipur under Kotwali Police Station, Yunus Bepari, 40, of Nayakhali and Ali Ahmed Bepari, 102, of village Bonga under Mehendiganj upazila.

Pannu and his accomplice Palash Mollah on Monday night slaughtered Helal for having an extra-marital affair with his wife Nilufa Begum. Locals later caught the killers, beat them up and handed them over to Gournadi police.

Unknown criminals strangled Mahfuza and dumped her body into a canal in the early hours yesterday as Mahfuza refused to withdraw an acid-burnt case she filed after her sister Joy nab Khanam Eva and father Qari Abdul Majid were killed in acid attack on August 28, 1998.

Yunus was stabbed by his opponents following a land dispute on Monday night. He succumbed to his injuries at a local hospital yesterday morning.

Unidentified criminals stormed into the house of Ali Ahmed early yesterday and slaughtered him.

The reason behind the killing could not be known.

AL blasts govt

FROM PAGE 1

elite force has been indiscriminately killing people in the name of curbing crime.

Government or any of its force has no right to kill people without proper trial and such activities are against the constitution and all norms of human rights, ALCWC members observed.

Rab personnel killed at least nine people including the key witness of AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master murder case since the force swung into action.

At the end of the two-day meeting at party's Dhanmondi office, the ALCWC decided to stage demonstrations across the country, except Dhaka, on August 13 to protest the recent bomb blast in Sylhet and killing of a Bangladeshi Chhatra League leader in Gopalganj. Similar demonstration would be held in Dhaka on August 21.

The highest decision making body of the AL also formed 26 sub-committees to monitor party relief operations for flood-hit people across the country. The committees would also keep an eye on government-run relief operations to "unearth incidents of looting of aid by ruling alliance loyalists," sources said.

The ALCWC meeting also decided to participate in the upcoming by-election of Netrokona-2 and pourasava polls of next month.

Four suspects

FROM PAGE 12

'Bartoman Dinkal' carried a story on the arrest in its August 2 issue. The police also recovered a revolver loaded with eight rounds of bullets from one of the arrestees, they said.

JS body

FROM PAGE 12

complete the investigation.

"I asked the convenor several times to sit and complete the probe report, but he did not respond," Ataur told The Daily Star.

"Why will I be on the subcommittee if it does not work," he said, adding he would ask the standing committee chairman to drop him from the subcommittee.

3 get death

FROM PAGE 1

Station the same night.

On June 13, 2001, Khoshrul Huq, assistant superintendent of police, pressed charges against 15 people in the case. The case was transferred to Rajshahi Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal on March 29 this year from Khulna Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal for security reasons.

Clarification

FROM PAGE 12

money. It may be mentioned here that the Swiss development assistance channelled through the government is not significant," ERD said.

It said Switzerland has actually a small bilateral programme in Bangladesh and there are only four Swiss-funded development projects currently under implementation by the Local Government Division and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. The projects are running smoothly.

Erratum

FROM PAGE 1

partial judgements. We regret any confusion arising out of computer errors. The correct version of the judgement will be published in its entirety on the same page in its 15 August issue.

NEWS

US embassy in Lanka

FROM PAGE 12

threat was or when the embassy planned to reopen for issuing visas and other consular services. "We are currently evaluating the situation, we can't say when we will reopen," Long said.

Asked if the embassy feared a terrorist strike, Long said: "We don't want to speculate."

Diplomatic sources said two upper floors of the embassy, located within a high-security zone of the capital, were

closed initially following receipt of a letter which contained some unidentified "powder".

Fearing an anthrax-type attack, the embassy shut its air conditioning system, switched off fans and ordered staff to leave, the sources said.

Most Western diplomatic missions here had stopped accepting mail from unknown sources to prevent anthrax scares.

Changes in admin

FROM PAGE 12

the prime minister.

He said all the five secretaries are holding posts at vital ministries and hinted that they might be removed soon.

The government, meanwhile, continued making changes at the high end of the administration. It yesterday appointed Additional Secretary Kazi Abul Kashem as the secretary-in-charge of cultural affairs ministry.

On Monday, the government transferred Mesbahuddin Ahmed, secretary to the president, to the Ministry of Defence. Abu Solaiman Chowdhury, the secretary-in-charge of cultural affairs ministry, replaced him.

The post of defence secretary fell vacant with the expiry of the contract of KM Ehsanul Haq.

SM Shamsul Alam, secretary-in-charge of the Power Division under energy and mineral resources ministry, was appointed as one of the members of the Planning Commission. Alam was replaced by secretary-in-charge of the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) under planning ministry Ehsan Shamim.

Acting Chairman of Land Appeal Board Abul Quasem was appointed as the secretary-in-charge of the IMED.

The government also cancelled the contractual appointment of Chairman of Power Development Board (PDB) Sayed Abdul Mayeed and appointed

Mukhlesur Rahman Khandaker, chief inspector of the Office of the Chief Inspector of Electricity, as the PDB chairman.

Official sources said the state minister-in-charge of the Power Division expressed serious dissatisfaction following the transfer order of his secretary and removal of the PDB chairman as well as fresh appointments to those posts without informing him.

They said the state minister met several senior ministers and talked to top officials at the Prime Minister's Office in this regard.

Karnaphuli

bridge shut for repair

UNB, Chittagong

Karnaphuli bridge at Kalurghat was yesterday closed to vehicular traffic for six months for repair.

Four ferries are on service to transport the vehicles round the clock on the busy highway linking Cox's Bazar and Teknaf.

The government will soon start repairing the century-old bridge at a cost of Tk10 crore.

Officials said 2,500 vehicles and five trains used to cross the bridge every day.

Blasts at Turkey

FROM PAGE 12

said he was fast asleep at the Pars Hotel when the blast ripped through a room two floors below him at around 1.40 a.m. (6:40 p.m. EDT).

"There was a really loud explosion and the room shook," he said, his foot bandaged after he cut it on broken glass. "The corridor was filled with smoke. It was a scary experience."

Anatolian said one of the dead as 31-year-old Haydar Baydar from Van in eastern Turkey and the other as Mahdi Pooliki from Iran. It said seven were wounded -- two Dutch citizens, two Chinese, a Ukrainian, a Turk and a Turkmenistan national.

Officials at police headquarters declined to give details.

Istanbul, Turkey's largest city and commercial capital, has been targeted repeatedly by bomb attacks in recent years.

There was no claim of responsibility for the latest blasts, but Kurdish militants, far-leftists and radical Islamist groups have all carried out bomb attacks in the city.

Pars Hotel staff said someone had telephoned 10 minutes before the blast to say there was a bomb in one of the rooms. There were 37 guests in the hotel at the time, mostly Iranian.

The other explosion happened on the second floor of the Holiday Hotel in Sultanahmet, the historical heart of Istanbul where many of its Byzantine and Ottoman monuments are located.

Police sealed off the area around both hotels and forensic teams searched through the debris for evidence. Anatolian said police also searched several other hotels for suspects and further explosive devices.

Waterlogging

FROM PAGE 12

the lakes because these recharge underground water, purify the water that flows to the main rivers, regulate the temperature of Dhaka City and maintain the water flow of the rivers in the winter," Abu Naser said.

Badiul Alam of Bangladesh Environment Journalists Forum said Rajuk is the biggest encroacher of the lakes and canals of Dhaka. Most of the encroachments have political links, he alleged, adding that without political goodwill it is not possible to stop illegal encroachment.

Architect Mobasher Hossain of Bapa urged civil society's involvement in the water management and ecology preservation projects of the government.

Deaths darken Rab

FROM PAGE 1

Anwarul Iqbal at a meeting on Sunday said deaths in Rab custody will be investigated if autopsy or forensic reports show they were killed, and the persons responsible will be tried.

Senior lawyers at a seminar recently noted that police or Rab will be held responsible for any deaths in their custody.

The Rab was introduced to curb organised crimes and bring listed top criminals to book but the elite force appears to concentrate more on nabbing drug addicts, drug traffickers and sex workers.

An elite force's primary engagement in such operations has also raised questions about the objectives of its formation at a huge expense of public money.

Explaining this, the Rab director general however said all criminals have links to drug trade.

The home ministry recently empowered the Rab to take any criminal on remand. The step followed reported police refusal to allow Rab personnel to take to their office and quiz any person on police remand.

On July 10, officer-in-charge (OC) of Uttara Police Station Mirza Hassan Mahmud was 'closed' apparently for not handing over a remanded accused to the Rab.

Of the people who died in custody, Sumon Ahmed Majumder, who was vice-president of Tongi municipal ward No. 10 unit of Jubo League, died at a Tongi hospital on July 16 allegedly due to Rab torture during interrogation while in custody.

Rab arrested Debashish, an alleged accomplice of 'Pichchi' Hannan, at a clinic in Savar on June 26 and sent him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital

Midnight murder in Madarsa

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Robbers shot dead an expatriate at Madarsa in Satkania upazila on Monday midnight.

The victim, Nurul Amin, 50, was scheduled to return to Saudi Arabia tomorrow after spending a three-month leave at home.

Police said the incident occurred at West Sikderpara of village Madhyam Rampur under Madarsha union at around 1:00am.

A band of 10 to 12 armed robbers stormed Nurul's house to commit a robbery. But Nurul courageously resisted, resulting in a scuffle with the gang. At this stage, one of the robbers shot him at close range.

Other inmates and neighbours rushed Nurul in a critical state to the Upazila Health Complex, where he succumbed to his bullet injuries.

The gang stole cash, ornaments and other valuables worth around Tk 50,000 from Nurul's house.

The victim was the son of Nurul Islam.

Trader abducted in Meherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An armed gang on Monday abducted a businessman from Gangni upazila in Meherpur as he failed to pay toll to local extortionists.

On August 5, the same gang demanded Tk 20,000 from pulses supplier Hamidul Islam, son of Noor Box, family sources said.

As the trader expressed his inability to pay the money, the gang stormed into Hamidul's Durlavpur village house and picked him up at gunpoint at around 8:30pm. They later demanded Tk 2 lakh for his release, sources said.

Gangni police, however, said none lodged any complaint with them till 5:00pm yesterday.

Sylhet police

FROM PAGE 1

had implicated him in the blast.

Nunu's wife Nasina at a press conference at Sylhet Press Club yesterday alleged that police had falsely implicated her husband in the crime.

She said the BNP MP is a political rival of AL leader Muhiibur Rahman, a close friend of Nunu.

Former AL lawmaker Shah Azizur Rahman and former upazila chairman Muhiibur Rahman also attended the press conference.

With stringent security in place, additional armed police are now guarding the markets, shopping malls and important street points round the clock. BDR personnel are also there.

People going to mosques are being checked.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina will visit Sylhet on August 12 and visit Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital to see the AL leaders, activists and others injured in Saturday night's blast.

Hasina will exchange views with the press at Sylhet Circuit House.

Hubble sights

FROM PAGE 12

our galaxy's large-scale structure.

Like the Milky Way, NGC 3949 has a blue disc of young stars peppered with bright pink star-birth regions.

In contrast to the blue disc, the bright central bulge is made up mainly of older, redder stars.

It is a member of more than 50 galaxies located in the direction of the Big Dipper, in the constellation Ursa Major (The Great Bear).

It is one of the largest galaxies in this cluster.

HUBBLE TROUBLE The image was created from data taken with the Hubble Space Telescope's Wide Field Planetary Camera 2 in 2001.

Separate exposures through blue, visible and near-infrared filters were combined to make the natural colour picture.

The US space agency Nasa announced on Friday that one of the four instruments on board the Hubble Space Telescope has stopped working.

The STIS, or Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph, stopped working on 3 August and went into what Nasa officials call a "suspended mode".

Engineers are currently trying to track down the source of the problem and Nasa has convened an Anomaly Review Board to determine whether the failed instrument is recoverable.

Hubble's other instruments are all operating normally.

US forces call for

FROM PAGE 12

US military fired a missile into a residential area, destroying an empty house after a patrol came under attack.

Two explosions rocked Baghdad's centre and smoke was seen rising from the cleric's northeastern stronghold as US military jets roared overhead.

Earlier, clashes raged for three and a half hours when a US patrol came under repeated attack as it drove through the centre of the sprawling slum.

Sporadic gunfire and mortar rounds continued to explode in Sadr City. Shops remained boarded up and the main road closed to traffic as armed militiamen roamed the streets, said an AFP correspondent.

4 INSURGENTS KILLED

Four insurgents were killed early yesterday when they attacked a Ukrainian patrol in central Iraq, a spokesman for the Polish-led multinational force patrolling that part of the country said.

"Terrorists in a car attacked an armoured vehicle in which the Ukrainians were patrolling," Polish Colonel Artur Domanski was quoted as saying by the PAP news agency.

"The soldiers returned fire and the attackers' car was completely destroyed" in the incident at Wasit, he said.

Domanski said there were no Ukrainian casualties.

Separately local police said three Iraqi civilians had been injured when a booby trap exploded as a Ukrainian convoy passed at Numaniyah, some 150km southeast of Baghdad.

Meanwhile, three Iraqi civilians were killed and several others injured when insurgents clashed with Danish soldiers in Al Qurnah north of Basra at the weekend, Danish daily Politiken reported yesterday, quoting hospital sources.

BRITISH SOLDIER KILLED

A British soldier was killed Monday during clashes with insurgents in Iraq's main southern city of Basra, the defence ministry in London said.

"I can confirm that there was a soldier killed this afternoon in Iraq. There have been a number of other casualties as well, during fighting with insurgents in our area of control," a ministry spokesman said, without elaborating.

"The situation has now calmed down," he said.

The spokesman said the victim was the ninth British soldier to die in Iraq this year.

JORDANIAN BUSINESSMAN KIDNAPPED

A Jordanian businessman has been snatched from his Baghdad home by an unknown group demanding a 250,000-dollar ransom for his release, his son said yesterday.

Sameh, a son of Jamal Sadek al-Salaymeh, 63, said he had no other details on Monday's kidnapping.

But the victim, a father of three, had contacted a friend "to tell him that the kidnappers are negotiating a ransom with him and they had reached agreement on a sum of 250,000 dollars", the son said.

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