

SAARC MEET

Militant hunt planned for blanket security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law enforcement agencies are likely to launch a massive hunt for militants and criminals ahead of the 13th Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Summit in Dhaka to ensure foolproof security during the meet scheduled for January 9-11 next.

Sources at the second inter-ministerial meeting on security of the Saarc summit held yesterday said the militant hunt would be launched to allay possible concern of foreign delegates to the summit over the security situation in the country.

Talking to newsmen later, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, who chaired the meeting, ruled out any possibility of the summit being affected by recent bomb blasts and threats. The summit will take place as

planned, he asserted.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia sat with Dhaka Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, and Communications Minister Nazmul Huda at her office yesterday to emphasise a congenial atmosphere in the capital during the summit.

At the inter-ministerial meet held at the home ministry, a proposal was tabled to construct a by-pass road linking VIP road with Zia International Airport to ease traffic congestion during the summit.

The proposed road would be an extension of VIP road through the old Tejgaon airport to avoid heavy congestion of vehicles crossing the soon-to-be-completed Mohakhali flyover on VIP road.

At the meeting, the state minister

reiterated his call to law enforcing agencies to focus on all security flash points in the capital before and during the January summit.

Babar said the focal points security during the summit would be the venues of its major programmes -- China-Bangladesh Friendship Centre and Hotel Sheraton-- Zia International Airport (ZIA), and Ansar Academy at Shafipur where a retreat of the delegates is scheduled.

Police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Bangladesh Rifles, Ansar and military personnel would be assigned to conduct security operations during the summit, meeting sources said.

The Rab is already carrying out a counter-militant operation, especially at the ZIA, in preparation for the summit security, the sources added.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR

Shilpi attends to her quadruplets all in good health and equal weight at Adwin Hospital in Dhaka yesterday. She gave birth to a baby girl five years ago.

PM urges NGOs to focus on agriculture rehabilitation

Orders quick rebuilding of Dhaka roads

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to lay emphasis on the post-flood agricultural rehabilitation programme, rebuilding the houses and installing tubewells for the affected

people.

Her call came when a delegation of the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) called on her at the Prime Minister's Office in the afternoon.

In another meeting with the members of the Good Governance and Development Committee for

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Raid at Ctg jewellery shop on smuggling suspicion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A joint team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday seized gold bars and ornaments reportedly worth about Tk 3 crore from a jewellery shop in Chittagong, suspecting the dear metals were smuggled into the country.

Raiding the port city's Boxirhat area at about 6:00pm, the joint team retrieved 268 bags of gold bars and jewellery from Nath Jewellery and held staffers Bivash, Suvasih, Laxman and Joydev, sources said.

Ramkrishna Nath, vice-president of Bangladesh Jewellery

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Prayer Timing		
August 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-41	6-44
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Officials of the Rapid Action Battalion check a passenger at Zia International Airport yesterday as part of beefed-up security measures after an anonymous telephone bomb threat sent three international airports on alert.

Jerusalem car bomb kills 2

REUTERS, Qalandiya, West Bank

A bomb has exploded between two Israeli army checkpoints on a busy transit route outside Jerusalem, killing two Palestinians and wounding 16 people, medics say.

Israel Radio said a Palestinian in a car being checked by police at the West Bank checkpoint of Qalandiya was believed to have detonated a bomb either hidden on his person or rigged to the vehicle.

Militants in Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction claimed responsibility for yesterday's attack.

Witnesses said the blast, which broke a lull in such bombings, occurred after Israeli border police declared a security alert and began

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Rab arrests hundi traders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Chittagong arrested four alleged hundi traders of a syndicate and seized Tk 14.56 lakh in two separate raids, but are unable to apprehend the syndicate's suspected kingpin.

The arrestees, all hailing from Fatikhkhari Upazila, were identified as Aman Ullah, an expatriate in Oman, his sister-in-law Rina Akhter, Selimuddin Mujin and Mizanur Rahman Masum.

The Rab team arrested Mujin and Masum on Tuesday afternoon with Tk 1,45,175 from Ali Akbar Road adjacent to Fatikhkhari Police Station.

Following their confessional statement, the team nabbed Aman

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

20 die as UK troops pound Iraqi militia

Four more killed in Baghdad market blast

AFP, Amara, Baghdad

Twenty people were killed and 50 wounded in overnight clashes between British troops and radical militiamen, medics said yesterday, as a week-old Shia uprising spread across central and southern Iraq.

For three hours, British jets bombed three districts of the southern city of Amara where militiamen were believed to be holed up, damaging six houses and

cutting off electricity supplies.

It was the first operation of its kind since Thursday, when heavy fighting broke out in the central holy city of Najaf between radical cleric Moqtada Sadr's Mehdi Army and US-backed Iraqi forces, a British spokesman confirmed.

British troops clashed with militiamen for about an hour late Tuesday when their tanks tried to cross a bridge into the city, an AFP correspondent said.

The director of the Al-Zahravi

hospital reported six dead and 15 wounded.

An official at the Sadr General Hospital said 14 bodies were brought in -- militiamen and civilians -- along with 35 wounded, three of them children.

British spokesman Major Ian Clooney said the multinational operation "was specifically targeted against insurgent positions from

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Britain nods to human cloning

AGENCIES, London

British scientists have been given permission to clone human embryos for medical research, thought to be the first such licence given in Europe.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) granted the licence to experts at the University of Newcastle.

They are investigating new treatments for conditions including diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.

The controversial decision could open a new era of research by scientists looking for remedies for diseases.

Researchers at Newcastle University will be allowed to create embryos as a source of stem cells to cure diseases, a spokeswoman for the university said on yesterday.

"It has taken a year of work, and I am most pleased that the HFEA has recognised the potential of this technology in modern

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

HUMAN CLONING

Donor egg

Nucleus removed from egg

Egg fused with DNA

Stem cells removed from embryo, used to treat Alzheimer's, heart disease, diabetes

Genetic material (DNA) taken from cell of person to be cloned

Embryo

US to launch biometric exit next month

Visa Waiver travellers get 1-yr extension to require biometric passports

STAR REPORT

Any foreign visitor with a visa who leaves US through one of 14 selected airports and three seaports will be required to comply with the automated biometric exit procedures from next month.

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) yesterday announced it would launch a pilot programme, US-VISIT, this month at three ports and expand it to 14 others next month to evaluate the exit procedures for foreign visitors with visa.

Visitors travelling under Visa Waiver Programme (VWP) through these ports will also be required to comply with the biometric procedures after September 30.

Meanwhile, the deadline for mandatory requirement of biometrically enabled passports for visitors from VWP countries to US has been extends by one year, to October 26, 2005, a US embassy news release said yesterday.

The extension came into effect last Monday with US President George W Bush signing HR 4417, a bill seeking the extension and passed by the House of Representatives on June 14 and by the Senate on July 22 last.

"The extension was necessary to avoid potential disruption of international travel and provide the international community adequate time to develop viable programs for producing a more secure, biometrically

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Dhaka to get major facelift ahead of Saarc summit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has taken a massive plan to give the capital a major facelift ahead of the upcoming 13th Saarc summit in January.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka at a meeting yesterday said under the special plan the corporation would beautify the VIP roads, their footpaths and medians, plant trees and clean the entire city by November.

The City Beautification and Other Emergency Services Committee, responsible to oversee the plan, held the meeting at the Nagar Bhaban with its chief Khoka in the chair.

The meeting formed a sub-committee with Qamrul Islam Siddique, executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB), as its head to look after the facelift activities.

Officials from the Roads and Highways Department, Bangladesh Railway, Local Government Engineering Department, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Public Works

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Four dead, one hurt in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people including a housewife were killed and an alleged criminal injured at different parts of the city during a span of 16 hours ending at 2:30pm yesterday.

Maryam Begum, 20, wife of Sirajuddin, was strangled to death inside the 3rd floor kitchen of an under-construction building at Rupnagar in Pallabi in the early hours.

On receiving information, police

recovered Maryam's body, with a scarf around her neck and scratch marks on her cheek and belly, at around 8:15am.

Police arrested Maryam's husband in the afternoon following a murder case filed against him by Hafizur Rahman, the owner of the house.

Police said they are investigating Maryam's strangulation.

In Khilgaon, 14-year-old street urchin Saiful was allegedly beaten to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1