The Daily Star

Sudden terror dims

FROM PAGE 1 television sets to know what was

happening, the details and the developments in the country's widest-ever terrorist bombing. A poor information outflow from the

government stoked up the confusion and gave rise to a rumour that a curfey was imposed or under way in the city Many people had phoned The Daily Star since the noon to verify if there was any truth behind the rumour.

As the news of the serial bomb blasts spread out. offices of many private companies and local and foreign development agencies, and schools and colleges in the capital and elsewhere closed hurriedly, with the authorities asking their staffs and students to leave immediately and stav at home

Many a city thoroughfare took on a deserted look by the afternoon, with only a few vehicles braving it out on the streets. People remained indoor, fearing further attack **SECURITY BEEF-UP**

IN BARIDHARA

Security fears made US Chargé d'Affaires Judith Ann Chammas postpone her scheduled participation in a view exchange meeting on trade and economy organised by the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries at 1:00pm in its boardroom. As two bombs exploded nearby

officials of the Washington-based National Democratic Institution (NDI) hurriedly wrapped up a programme it organised in Jatiya Press Club conference room and left the area under police protection

A number of bombs also went off simultaneously around the city's Baridhara diplomatic zone, prompting an immediate security hike-up, with additional police and other law enforcers checking every vehicle entering,

leaving or plying in the area. Foreign missions and development agencies held emergency meetings and postponed all their programmes outside the capital. The missions also instructed their expatriate citizens here to stay at home.

Unicef-Dhaka Communications Officer Rezwanul Alam said, "We have postponed all the field trips outside Dhaka until further instructions from our higher authorities." Besides, Unicef-Dhaka officials have been instructed to move carefully in the city in the next few days.

Similar instructions have been given to the officials of Save the Children, Sweden, when it closed its office in the noon.

"We have cancelled all programmes and instructed our officials not to go out of Dhaka," said an official of the UNDP Dhaka office. PANIC GRIPS CITIZENS

"All of a sudden, there was a huge

bang," Rafiqul Islam, who witnessed the two bomb explosions near the Secretariat and Jatiya Press Club, described. "It's not safe anywhere anymore," he noted, adding, "The bombs were aimed at spreading panic among people, not to kill them.

Fakhrul Hasan, manager of an insurance company, was working in his 10th-floor office in a 20- storey building in Motifheel at the noon. He heard the news of the countrywide homb hit on a television channel Coming out of his office, he found the entire floor almost empty.

"People have become panicky because this is the first time in the history of Bangladesh that hundreds of bombs have blasted across the country simultaneously," he told The Daily

Fakhrul left the office and headed

area," said Siddique, an employee of a shop on Topkhana Road. At first he thought it was a tyre blast, but he closed the shop anyway, seeing the panicked faces all around.

Siddique re-opened the shop after half an hour. But many traders on the Bangabandhu Avenue and in the stadium market closed their shops in the afternoon, much earlier than their routine Many an official left their cars back

in the office parking lots and returned home by bus, fearing obstacle or attack on the way. "I didn't dare to bring out my car from the parking lot as thought I would face processions and rallies on the road," said Ariful Islam, a businessman.

Transactions at banks and commercial houses were pretty thin after the lunch. People hesitated to go to banks in the afternoon, while the banks also advised their clients, who telephoned them, not take the risk of coming to deposit or withdraw money.

"Normally, we deposit our day's collection in the afternoon, but today the bank asked me not come with the cash," said Abdus Sattar, an employee of a Motijheel business house. STUDENTS CAUGHT

IN CHAOS Akhtarul, a student of Engineering University Higher Secondary School in the capital, was waiting for his family vehicle as his parents asked him not to go home alone like other days.

"My mother sounded very anxious when she told me to stay in the school until our car came She called my school as soon as she watched reports on TV channels about the blasts,' Akhtarul, student of class IX, said. Panic struck thousands of students

and their parents soon after a string of blasts took place in Dhaka's different

A large number of students of school and colleges skipped their ongoing midterm examinations yesterday fearing more blasts.

within the four-party alliance. There are 24 government and over 100 private schools in the capital that have about one lakh students.

Authorities of different city schools told The Daily Star they may close the institutions if the situation does not improve. The schools include Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, Engineering University School, Udavan School, Ideal High School, Pogose School, Holy Cross Girls' High School and College, and

Scholastica school Scholastica authorities have closed the school for today and asked the parents and guardians to contact them on Sunday morning before sending their children to school.

"If the situation improves, we'll not cancel the ongoing exams. But we may even closes the school if the situation deteriorates, because many students couldn't attend today's (Wednesday) exams," Rowana Hossain, principle of Vigarunnisa

Noon School and College, told The Daily Star. Those who missed yesterday's exams will have the chance to sit for them under special arrangements, she

said. Most of the parents expressed their concern over safety of their children. Many of them rushed to their children's schools to safely bring them back

"If the exam is not postponed, even expert, adding that there was a delay then I'll not send my daughter to timer with each of the bombs that school; security of life is much more d the explo important than the exams," said Jesmin, a worried mother of a student of Vigarunnisa school Many other parents expressed the me concern. Authorities of different schools and colleges said they received a huge time, he said. 'The bombs made huge sound number of calls from the worried parents.

"The incidents are possibly

designed to convey a message, more

importantly of their presence and

organisational ability then of ideology

The state minister for home, how-

ever, yesterday claimed they had

information of an attack in between

August 14 and 16, which raised gues-

tions about the ability of the government

"We did not have any information of

such attacks on August 17," State

Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar

said. "We had intelligence reports of

some attacks in between August 14 to

attacks, terming the yesterday's attack

organised. The state minister at a

meeting on August 13 directed the law

enforcement agencies to ensure

high ups and chief of different intelli-

gence agencies, as they were abso-

lutely clueless about the attacks

Just after the incidents, all the

ntelligence agencies started unearth-

ing clues while the law enforcers'

The attacks jolted the government

foolproof security in Dhaka.

The state minister feared more

itself." he observed.

to foil the plan.

sources said.

16."

300 blasts Blasts prove

Although the opposition political FROM PAGE 1 parties blamed the government for laxity to deal the fundamentalist

FROM PAGE 1

militants

media.

killings to create anarchy, eating its

and interviews of the militant leader.

But the press notes on the ban

blamed the two organisations of

carrying out a series of murders,

robberies, bomb attacks, threats and

various kinds of terrorist acts causing

deaths to peace-loving people and

links of both Bangla Bhai and his

Sangsad on the day, the BNP chair

Newspapers investigations found

said on January 26.

destruction of property.

like rule in Bangladesh.

egation against them.

Weak bombs

said intelligence sources.

Most of the bombs were kept in pack

ets or bags but did not contain any kind

of splinters or powerful explosives,

manufactured locally, said sources of

a meeting of the intelligence agencies

held after the blasts at the home ministry. The makers of the bombs

were well-trained, the sources added.

common gunpowder and sawdust.

The bombs were hand-made and

he claimed.

FROM PAGE 1

Shahidul Islam.

anyone, he explained.

FROM PAGE 1

As the militants played out their fire-power, the capital was in the grip of organisations with strong hands, the panic and insecurity. Many offices closed down, markets pulled down shutters, the government is yet to recognise it officially as an act of the Islamist stock market stopped trading for about an hour as prices crashed and parents As newspapers carried a series of scrambled to bring home their children from school. Soon after noon, the traffic reports on Islamist militancy over the

last two years, the government kept on on the roads thinned out denying the existence of the militants, Paramilitary BDR, Rapid Action terming Bangla Bhai's Jagrata Muslim Battalion (Rab) and police forces were deployed across the country, while army Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) and other troops were put on high alert at the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Check militant organisations as a creation of posts have been erected and vehicles The government banned the JMJB are being searched. and JMB on February 23 accusing them of series of bomb attacks and

NEWS

9:45am and 10:30am injuring two.

The injured were identified as Delwar

Hossain, 13, Abdul Hai, 32, Md Ismail, 12, and Habibur Rahman, 60. They were

undergoing treatment at Chittagong

Medical College Hospital (CMCH) and General Hospital. The identity of others

injured in front of a school just opposite to

Press Club at around 11:00am. The

bomb was kept in a shelf beneath his van.

live bombs and 12 'chocolate' bombs

from Kadamtali area under the

Pativa, Azizul Hag, 25, of Pahartali

Younus Khan, 47, of Anwara, and Joynal

off at eight points -- three on the court and

DC office premises, one each at Kajla

Gate of Rajshahi University, Rajshahi

University of Engineering and

Technology, RDA Market, Laxmipur,

New Market, Gourhanga crossing, Shalbagan Bazar, Naodapara areas.

No injuries or damages were

reported but the blasts caused a severe

vacated the streets within a few hours of

most of the shops were closed immedi-

Police picked up five people for

In Khulna, fifteen bombs were

Four persons were arrested from the

The entire city has been put on red

All madrasas have been cordoned by

In Sylhet, at least 15 bombs went off in

The series of blasts took place from

the city yesterday morning while 3 live bombs were recovered from two places.

11:00am to 11:15am in the public places

including five small and roadside shrines

in the city. However, only three persons received splinter injuries and were

admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical

Rikabibazar area as someone is said to

have thrown a bomb from it, a police official said. The driver, Babul Miah, 30,

Biswanath, and Quamrul Islam Siddiqui,

20, of Sunamganj sustained minor

wounds in their legs in the Judge court

blast while Matilal Dhar, 25, of

Lamabazar sustained injuries in his head

In Barisal, A series of bombs exploded at least 18 points of the city

injuring four people. Seven live bombs

Barisal Kotwali police detained three

About the three EC members now

vere recovered from the blast spots.

A private car was seized at the city's

Of the injured, Habibullah. 35. of

city but police did not disclose their

alert and a huge number of armed police

and members of Rab has been deployed

at all key points and installations.

names

police and Rab.

College Hospital.

has also been caught.

at the Ambarkhana blast.

In Rajshahi, at least 12 bombs went

Doublemooring Police Station.

Abedin, 45, of Brahmanbaria,

Rab arrested four persons with three

They are Parimal Chandra, 30, of

Md Ismail, a mobile fruit vendor, got

couldn't be known until around 3:45pm.

Army intelligence has started gather-ing information about the blasts with main attention on Jama'atul sources said

own words of denial of their existence. Jama'atul Mujahideen is a group Earlier, government high-ups, headed by Islamic extremist Dr Asadullah Ghalib, who is now in jail on ruling coalition leaders and high police officials had repeatedly denied the charge of bombing some NGO offices including Brac and Grameen Bank. The existence of Bangla Bhai and JMJB, brushing aside the newspaper stories group was once led by Bangla Bhai, the nfamous Islamist militant who spread a "We don't know officially about the reign of terror in the northern districts existence of the JMJB. Only some sobefore he disappeared recently.

In Chapainawabganj, one person was killed and three others were injured One unexploded bomb was recov ered at the DC office premises. called newspapers are publishing reports on it. We don't have their constitution in our record," State in a series of near-simultaneous bomb blasts yesterday morning. Rabiul Islam, a rickshawpuller of Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar

panic among the city dwellers who Swarupnagar in Sadar upazila, was critically injured when seven bombs the blasts. Educational institutions and exploded at about 11:10am at Biswa Road crossing near Shah Niamat Ullah ately after the explosions. College in the northern district town

He succumbed to his injuries on way interrogation from the blast sites. to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. Three others injured in the explosion exploded in 13 places, but no one was are -- Rabi Saha, a porter of Dariapur Moti Rabi Das of Baliaghata and Ashok of hurt in the blasts.

religious mentor, Abdur Rahman, both Kalinagar. "A youth aged about 20 years kept a of whom are also involved with the tiny paper-made box near us and went JMB, with al-Qaeda and other Taliban away asking us to have a look on it for a leaders and the two told newspapers while. Within a few minutes it went off. that they wanted to establish Taliban said Rabi Saha before he fainted at Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital. Six other bombs exploded almost The PM, however, on March 15

denied any existence of Taliban and alsimultaneously on the premises of District Judge Court, Bar and DC (deputy Qaeda. In her speech in the Jatiya commissioner) office premises and New person termed reports about their Market area in the town but no one was activities nothing by the opposition's injured in the blasts

propaganda aimed at causing a rift In Chittagong, bombs exploded at 16 city spots including the Chittagong Press Club and the Bangladesh Bank pre-The PM said Islamic organisations mises, court building and near the Kotwali Police Station, injuring six peohave long been working to spread the message of Islam and its ideology "They've also made an important ple. Law enforcers arrested four suscontributions to maintaining social pected persons with three bombs and 12 chocolate bombs. Police also recovered integrity and harmony. There's no few abandoned live bombs from different spots.

Almost identical comments came A panicky situation has been prefrom Industries Minister Nizami in vailed in the entire city following the parliament and at a public meeting in explosions.

Dhaka the same day. Not only Jamaat-e-Islami, none of the known Islamic Other places where bombs blasts occurred were: GEC Intersection, Kazir Dewri, Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge, organisations has a link to militancy, WASA Intersection, Lalkhan Bazaar, New Market, Muradpur, Sholoshahar, Bohaddarhat, Dewanhat, Kadamtali and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) premises in Anderkilla.

Most of the bombs went off simultaneously with a big bang between 11:00am and 11:30am, excepting two spots at GEC Intersection and Kazir Dewri, where two bombs blew up at

persons. They were Manir Howladar, 30, Alauddin, 34, and Yunus, 28. **FBCCI** directors elect

FROM PAGE 16

"The bombs consisted of a simple leaders however said the change was circuit, couple of batteries, a switch, only aimed at getting certain aspirants elected to the top posts following a said Deputy Commissioner (DC) of 'consensus'. The new election schedule was

Detective Branch (DB) of police made in the absence of three elected The electric wiring was set in a executive committee (EC) members. manner so that the bombs do not who has no idea about the changed explode mid-way, said another bomb schedule. "They are accompanying the prime

will have to submit nomination papers by 1:30pm today and the election minister as entourage to China and are board will publish a list of primary candiiled to return home on Augus dates at 2:00pm. The time limit for withdrawal of candidature is 3:00pm 21." said a business leader. What will happen if any of these while the final list of valid candidates wil

Hasina points

FROM PAGE 16 create an unstable situation in the country," she alleged.

While talking to journalists on the ferry on her way back to Dhaka from Tungipara, Hasina, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, pointing her finger to "Hawa Bhaban" said the incidents of bomb blasts took place at the direct patronisation of that bhaban with the government assistance.

"Without government's involvement no one can carry out such an incident of a series of bomb blasts at 63 districts at a time," she said.

The opposition leader said the officials of law enforcement agencies, including police, Rab, Cheeta and Kobra, in a room in the name of holding world here and hereafter. a meeting and carried out the attacks so that the 'operation' could take place smoothly.

"After one year of the 21 August every time the government arrested grenade attack, the government is yet to arrest anybody. With carrying out their workers. However, JMB did not resort to any retaliation. today's bomb blasts, they prepared another plot to kill me," she alleged. JMB," the group said. If the govern-

"Is there any government in the country? Are there any law enforcement agencies in the country? What are they doing? Or is it a signal of deep conspiracy?" she questioned.

Hasina urged people to find out the perpetrators who carried out the bomb The JMB appealed to the members of parliament from both the treasury lasts.

She also urged people to launch a and the opposition benches to immedi-ately introduce Islamic rule in the united movement to form a democratic government though holding a free and country burying all partisan disputes. They called the present democratic ir election by ousting this 'autocratic', 'failed' and 'corrupt' government system a creation of 'kafer' (infidels)

6 picked

FROM PAGE 16 panjabi, however, claimed himself to be innocent, saying he found the packet on the street and that it exploded as he picked it up.

The airport police picked up five--Zahidul Islam, Kawsar Ahmed, Hamidur Rahman, Mohammad Shahjalal and Rabiul Islam--from Zia nternational Airport (ZIA) and Airport Railway Station after two blasts took

place in the area. Shahjalal, 21, who claimed himself to be a hafez from Jamia Arabia Emdadul Ulum Madrasa at Faridabad in Jatrabari of the city, was standing some 200 yards away from the bomb that exploded on an abandoned staircase connecting the ground floor and first floor of the arrival and departure lounges at the airport.

He told this correspondent that he went to the airport to receive a huzur religious teacher), who was supposed

to land in Dhaka yesterday. "He [Shahjalal] was standing in the sun with an umbrella staring towards the bombed place," Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Airport Police Station Hanif told The Daily Star yesterday. "There were many shades and the departure lounge where he could stand and ^f the OC explained. wait,

Police picked up Zahidul, Kawsar and Hamidur--all introduced themselves as students of Darul Ulum Jamia Madania Madrasa at Jatrabari--while they were roaming about ZIA after the blasts.

against the attackers will be taken administratively and politically, together with the public," he said. They told The Daily Star that they came to buy sweets from the Tangai Cham Cham Sweets at the airport. that anyone can frighten it with mere Asked why they came as far as to the airport from Jatrabari to buy sweets, bomb attacks, he added.

they could not give any reason. mise on terrorism, and the BNP-Rabiul was arrested from the Jamaat-led alliance will foil every bid to Airport Railway Station, a little distant create anarchy in the country. "We must be cautious of the forces, from the place of another explosion who want to come to power by any means and who don't believe in the

A third-year student of Islamic studies at Jagannath University and politics of development and democracy," the minister said.

Leaflets ridicule

DHAKA THURSDAY AUGUST 18, 2005

FROM PAGE 1 It is one of the two extremist organisations recently banned by the govern-ment in the wake of violent acts allegedly committed by their activists, the other one being Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) of so-called Bangla Bhai, now hiding.

Chief of the JMB, Asadullah-al-Galib, a teacher at the Rajshahi University is now in jail One of the handbills procured from the Rajshahi city reads: we want to

"Inshallah", the group warned.

earn Almighty's satisfaction by establishing Khalis Tauhid (pure monotheism) by putting an end to bida't and want to make the people happy in the under the present constitution. The leaflet says the JMB urged the abide by evil laws, obey the laws of government twice earlier to establish

Allah," it says. "Don't take arms under the evil Íslamic Hukumat (Islamic order), but laws against the soldiers of Allah. Give up your loyalty to evil power and join the force of Allah's soldiers," the self-styled sentinels of religion said with a "But this is the third appeal from note of caution that steps would be taken against those who would not ment does not establish Islamic laws in

the country after this third warning and, rather, it goes to arrest any Muslim on cease lovalty to 'evil power. "Allah says those who are faithful fight for the cause of Allah. On the charge of seeking Allah's laws or it contrary, the kafers fight for evil forces," the JMB said. resorts to repression on Alem-Ulema, the JMB would go for counteraction,

In a separate appeal to world Muslims, they said the "biggest terrorist" of present world is George W Bush who launches attack on innocent Muslims by resorting to terrorism and tries to make the Muslim nonbelievers by forcibly imposing "Kufri (evil) Constitution".

"They want to bring the whole world world order by establishing Kufri concept of democracy. It seems to be a neo-Pheraoni ambition," the leaflet stated, " but soldiers of Allah will not allow their ambition to come true and establish Kufri concept of democracy. They lamented that those who take

arms for the cause of Allah are branded as militants and terrorists. But Almighty Allah says "Hey believers! Pick up your own arms and come out in battalions separately or unitedly"

"Therefore, it is our appeal to world Muslims, you compel your government in your respective Muslim coun-try to implement Allah's rules. Quit Kufri United Nations and form Muslim United Nations and strengthen the Muslim ummah."

Administering a note of caution for 'Kafers and Mushriks', the JMB urged the Bush-Blair duo to quit their occupation of Muslim countries. "The Muslims across the world are rising up. If you don't stop repression forthwith, you will not be allowed to live in safety any where in the world."

The group asked anti-Islam NGOs to stop activities against Islam. "Othervise, you will be uprooted.'

BNP joint secretaries Abdullah Al Noman and Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Advisor to Commerce Ministry Barkatullah Bulu, State Minister for abour and Employment Amanullah Aman, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman, State Minister for Public Works Mirza Abbas among others, addressed the rally.

Jamaat-e-Islami Rally Leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami, a coalition partner of the ruling BNP, has blamed yesterday's blasts across the country on the Al

Jamaat leaders at a rally said the AL conducted the unprecedented blasts as part of a blue print to make the country politically unstable.

Addressing the rally, BNP Standing City unit Jamaat organised the rally at the northern gate of national Baitul Committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain termed the blasts a planned action. He said, "Those who Mokarram mosque at Paltan. Jamaat Secretary General and Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan M committed the heinous crime. Mujahid addressed the rally as the "They want to prove Bangladesh a plant of bombs," he said, hinting at the chief guest. He said the opposition has blasted main opposition Awami League (AL) the bombs when the country is moving "They want to create political issues as forward with achievements in poverty they don't have a genuine issue alleviation and economic growth. against the government Speaking as the special guest, M Mosharraf, also the health minister Quamruzzman, senior assistant secretary general of Jamaat, pointed said with two-thirds of majority in parliament, they will do everything to an accusing finger at the oppositions. He said those who failed to gain resist the heinous efforts of creating anarchy. public support for their 14-point reform Minister Barrister Moudud proposals have planned the bomb Ahmed termed the bomb attacks a blasts to destroy the country's democ-'conspiracy' to foil the development process of the government. "This is Presided over by Monirul Islam nothing but an immature political game," he added. Patwari, president of Jamaat city unit the rally was addressed by Jamaat leaders ATM Azharul Haq, Adul Kader "We will resist any forces whoever they are -- pro-Pakistani, pro-Indian, Mollah and Prof Mujbur Rahman rightists or leftists." said BNP city unit The leaders and activists of Jamaat President Sadeque Hossain Khoka also took out a protest procession after Khoka, also the mayor of Dhaka, asked the home ministry to immedithe rally.

China. Anisuzzaman said the election board has nothing to do if any aspirants "He was roaming about the area suspiciously," said the OC. do not know the new schedule or do not take part in the voting. Under the changed schedule, candidates for the post of president, first vice-president and vice-president

also an Imam of a mosque at Ishal colony in the airport area, Rabiul told this correspondent that he went to the station after taking English lessons from

tional shape to democracy are the enemies of Islam," says the leaflet, adding that if they want 'hedayet (blessings) of Allah', both the government and the opposition should unitedly introduce Islamic law immediately

producing two groups--the govern

ment and the opposition, dividing the nation thereby. And this system gives

right to enforce hartal and blockade to

assume power, causing damage to

Those who want to give institu-

public interest

by burying party conflicts. They called for shunning the evil Constitution and removing all 'shirks, bida't' and obscenity to implement Islamic rule in the country and allowing the people to perform Islam the correct way. "But if you, being scared of Bush-

Blair clique, don't have the courage to establish Islamic rule, quit the evil politics of democracy," they said. And then "the Tauhidee janata will establish Islamic laws following the system of Sura (highest Islamic Consultative Committee) comerciance Allowed Committee) comprising Alem, Ulema, Masaek and Islamic scholars" In an appeal to bureaucrats and

BNP asks

"I want to announce that actions

BNP is not a weak or a small party

He said there will be no compro-

FROM PAGE 16

game.

ately probe the bomb attacks.

She expressed a firm commitment

"China is now one of the leading

development. Domestic stability has

economic development," she noted.

helped China gain momentum in

"Economic and trade cooperation

She observed that Chinese assis-

Friendship Conference Centre in

Expecting the narrowing of the

She also mentioned the congenia

and stability and strengthening the

bilateral cooperation to ensure maxi-

mum benefits for the two peoples.

FROM PAGE 16

judges, the JMB called for stopping administrative and judicial activities under what they called evil laws of

slamic laws.' "Because, democracy is the prod-uct of evil power," it said. "Democracy is the main weapon to establish evil forces in the world. This evil order allows the arrest of Mujahideen who are on Allah's path.'

democracy,

The leaflet also carries a call for all members of the armed forces, including army, BDR, police and Rab, to protect the laws of Allah instead of "evil laws" now prevailing in the country Don

constitution and the

government that did not establish Islamic rule. " Make your life worthy by

gaining Allah's blessings by extending

our all-out cooperation in establishing

who works at another office in Motijheel to do the same as early as possible. The situation was almost the same

in most of the high-rises in Motijheel and the nearby commercial areas.

"I brought down the shutter of our shop immediately, upon hearing a boom coming from the press club

Series of blasts poses

FROM PAGE 1

Terming yesterday's incident as a longterm threat to the country's security system, they stressed the need for strenghtheing intelligence agencies with adequate logistic support and training and ensuring punishment to those in all previous attacks.

At least 300 hombs were exploded for over half-an-hour in different secured areas across the country where members of the intelligence agencies always remain on duty. But the agencies failed to detect any clues and could not even arrest any one with bombs before the attack.

Referring to over four hundred bombs and grenade explosions since 1999, former advisor to the caretaker government Major General (Rtd) Mainul Hossain Chowdhury said. "These are happening mainly due to lack of proper intelligence, weak investigation and the absence of subsequent proper prosecution.'

"We've not yet been able to hold the culprits who masterminded attacks on political meetings, cinemas, fairs and shrines," Main told The Daily Star last evening

Main, also a former security and risk advisor of the UNDP. said the latest attack is carried out to terrorise people of Bangladesh and disrupt normal life

He observed that these sorts of antistate activities should be dealt with properly and promptly as dealt with by Western countries. Otherwise such incidents will continue to take place frequently.

"Political will, professionalism and total devotion of the policymakers and the law enforcement agencies are prerequisite to stop terrorist activities in the country," he said.

Referring to the law enforcers' action after any incident takes place, Main said, "Our law enforcers have reactive approach, rather than proactive in enforcing law and order.

"Taking opportunities of absence of rule of law and weakness of authorities of laws, criminals are carrying out such terrorist activities frequently since 1999," Main said

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, well-known security analyst Major General (Rtd) Syed Mohammad Ibrahim said. "It's a long term security threat because nothing exposes silently, things take shape over a period of time. So the incidents of August 17 are not out of the blue because of the lack of the security system,

minutes of activation. "This means at least one person was involved with each bomb," he said.

one to tw

The time device made it possible to the post of president or blast such a big number of bombs president?" another business leader across the whole country within a short posed the question.

Some senior business leaders involved in the FBCCI election said the creating panic in the localities, but in most cases did not hurt anyone," said election board was pressurised to announce the new schedule to make the bomb expert. The bombs were way for consensus candidates and to prevent any rival candidates from placed at unnoticeable spots of crowded public places which indicates announcing their candidature.



lost their lives.

Bangladesh.

day

Dhaka and other places.

of bomb attacks in Bangladesh.

The random nature of these blasts

We hope the Bangladesh govern-

the perpetrators and organisers of this

heinous crime." said the US Embassy.

person told the news agency that they

were aware of the incident and con-

Bangladesh authorities. We are

urgently trying to establish whether

vesterday issued a fresh alert in border

any British nationals were affected.

demned "all acts of terrorism."

A British High Commission spokes-

"We are in touch with the

the blasts were government establish ments like court buildings and offices of Condemnation the deputy commissioners.

The press note said there was time FROM PAGE 1 device in the bombs that were exploded seriously. The scale and co-ordination and leaflets of the recently banned of these explosions countrywide Jama'atul Mujahideen were found at raises a number of questions." the places of occurrence.

Spokesperson Navtej Sarna in the From an analysis it seems the main statement said, "Our sympathies go out to the victims and their families. We objective of the planned bomb blasts was to scare the people and create an have no reports of injuries to Indian unstable situation in the country. citizens as yet. Our diplomatic person-The press note further said that nel are all safe."

some miscreants have been caught red-handed in different districts. The members of the law enforcement agencies have been directed to identify the miscreants involved in the blasts and people behind the scenes and bring them to book as soon as possible

The government also urged people to provide information about the mis creants and their plans, if they have any, to the nearest police stations.

Various rumours spread following

the blasts and newspaper offices were

flooded with telephone calls asking

whether the government has advised

people to return home by the afternoon. Many people wanted to know if the

government is announcing an emer-

almost deserted. Most young people

stayed home to avert untoward situa-

from school. But police searched my

bag extensively." said Mostafa Jamil, in

body and bag search of young people in

particular. Security check posts were seen in Motijheel, Press Club,

Fakirapul, Dhaka University, Shabagh,

New Market, Dhanmandi, Gulshan

Airport, and Secretariat areas and also

Markets and shopping malls were

"I have come to take my nephew

The law enforcers were conducting

gency situation in the city.

Dhanmondi area.

in old part of the citv.

tions

terrible scourge for people from all religions and all walks of life, it said. Extensive search ment will succeed in bringing to justice

FROM PAGE 16

launched a crackdown to nab criminals. Heavy traffic congestion occurred as Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, police blocked many roads to check passing vehicles in the first half of the former army chief Mahbubur Rahman said the intelligence agencies should have been more alert to detect such The number of vehicles on roads however sharply decreased in the

subversive activities. "The parliamentary standing comafternoon as the panic gripped people mittee on defence ministry on several returned home following the bomb blasts at 28 points

occasions discussed the weakness of the intelligence agencies for their continual failure to detect threats to the country's security system," Mahbub, also chairman of the committee, said.

The parliamentary body has also asked the government to strengthen intelligence agencies. "We are informed that measures were taken to strengthen the intelligence agencies," he added.

"The attack reminded us of the necessity to reinforce intelligence agencies in terms of manpower, training and equipment," Mohammad Ibrahim said.

Referring to the Saarc summit, Mohammad Ibrahim said the incident would send very unfriendly signals abroad, particularly on the eve of the "The government alone possisummit. bly can not tackle it. So all the political parties and civil society personalities with the people should be united to face

members had the desire to contest for be published at 3:30pm. Polling for the three top posts will be held from 4:30pm to 5:30pm and the election board will publish poll results

soon after the closing of voting. 24 elected and 14 nominated directors, who comprise executive committee will elect the top leadership. Nomination fee for the post of president is Tk 1 lakh and that for vice-

president is Tk 50 thousand. Seeking anonymity, a disgruntled presidential aspirant said the new schedule has been made following

pressure from a certain quarter having strong hold in the government. Direct election to elect 24 EC

members was not needed because of so-called 'consensus' candidates as other aspirants withdrew from the race. All the 24 government-backed candidates got elected unopposed from the chamber and the association group. They have also been asked to

Shahid again The BDNews adds: In a statement

Shahidul Islam alias Shahid Chairman, union parishad (UP) chairman of Anwara sadar union where victim Jamal Uddin's village is located, also gave names of all others involved in the incident and narrated the abduc-

tion on Tuesday night. Shahid said Maruf Nizam planned underscores the savagery of terrorism and the global dimensions of this the abduction and had it accomplished with the help of his business partner Helal and UP Chairman of Hiledhar union Shahiahan.

Earlier on Sunday, while talking to the journalists at the Patenga Rab Headquarters, Shahid Chairman named Maruf Nizam, his business partner Helal and UP Chairman Shahjahan for their involvement in the abduction.

Chittagong-based business magnet and also a leader of Chittagong (south) district unit of BNP, was handed over to Kashem Chairman, chairman of Kanchan Nagar union under Fatikchhari upazila, Shahid said.

better known to Kashem Chairman, West Bengal's IGP (Law and said the Rab officials quoting Shahid. Order) Rai Kanojia told PTI that an

remand in an arms case on Tuesday. since the Independence Day. A fresh alert was issued following the blasts in

started disclosing sensational informa-tion as the Rab changed its style of Kanojia said that state police was in constant touch with the BSF for intensifying patrols in areas along the Indo-

Haq admitted that they got the names of the persons involved in the abduction expressed condolences to the victims He expressed the condolence during his meeting with Prime Minister

Khaleda Zia, who is now in Beijing on a five-day official visit that began yesterconfessed to the interrogation team for the sake of investigation.

PM condemns FROM PAGE 1

The prime minister urged people irrespective of political affiliations, to resist such heinous acts.

The prime minister sent directives to Dhaka to identify those involved in the bomb attacks, the conspirators behind the scene and for their arrest. She also asked all concerned to ensure proper treatment of those injured in the bomb attacks.

AL, allies call

FROM PAGE 1 "Fundamentalist forces with direct patronisation of the BNP-Jamaat-led ruling coalition committed the crimes to destroy the country's democratic process and movement by the secular orces," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told reporters reading out a joint statement of the meeting.

The statement demanded immediate resignation of the 'Khaleda-Nizami' alliance government, admitting its involvement in the heinous crime and failure to ensure security of people. "How can a bomb be blasted inside mutual trust and respect. the airport through which Prime Minister Khaleda Zia left for China only two hours to work together for peace, progress

ago?" Jalil posed the question Such a devastating attack was not possible without the government's patronisation and involvement, he

The opposition leader also raised questions about State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar's statement saying 'government had information about such attacks by some group development. between August 14 and 16'. "If so, why the government did not take any action to thwart the group's move and to nab China. the criminals." Jalil said.

He also alleged that through the government's wise policies that have bomb blasts, the government wanted to foil the opposition's united movetransformed China into a vibrant economic powerhouse within a couple ment for reforms in the caretaker of decades government system and election countries in the world, especially in the field of scientific and technological

"We have been asking the government to take action against the militant groups. But instead of doing that, the government is protecting these groups." he alleged.

To protest the bomb blasts, the is a strong component of Bangladesh-China relations. We are now poised to parties will hold two joint rallies in Dhaka -- one at the Central Shaheed look into a future of promises and results in our bilateral relations," the Minar premises this afternoon and the prime minister said. other at Muktangon tomorrow. Similar demonstrations will also be held in other parts of the country. tance for socioeconomic modernisa-

leader Amir Hossain Amu tion of Bangladesh is visible all over the country. She mentioned six friend-ship bridges and Bangladesh-China chaired yesterday's meeting, attended by Tofail Ahmed, Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haq Inu, Fazle Hossain Badsha, Pankaj Bhattacharya and Nurul Islam, among Dhaka as a few examples. existing trade gap between the two countries, Khaleda said, "We hope others.

Earlier, an emergency meeting of China will take steps for tariff reduction with a view to making import from the AL Central Working Committee held at the party's Dhanmondi office Bangladesh easier." also accused the government and militant groups of involvement in the environment provided by the present government for foreign direct investbomb blasts

Ties with China

nent. "This would help narrow down Addressing the function, Khaleda said the trade imbalance between the two countries", she said. The prime minister reiterated the relationship with China is now firmly established on a solid footing of

Bangladesh's support to China in bringing about reforms in the UN system that would benefit all the member states and in which the development agenda is duly priori-

She also extended support for the China plays an important and One-China policy, in which Taiwan and positive role as a development partner of Bangladesh, the prime minister Tibet are its integral parts.

Earlier, the prime minister was accorded a warm reception on her said, hoping that the friendly people of China will always support the people of arrival at Beijing International Airport. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei and other Chinese senior Bangladesh in their journey towards

She assured that as a trusted friend Bangladesh would always support officials were present at the airport to receive the Bangladesh leader Khaleda praised the Chinese

Bomb blasts FROM PAGE 16

metropolitan sessions judge, district magistrate and chief metropolitan magistrate (CMM) felt insecure to proceed with their activities. They demanded tight security on the court premises.

Four bombs exploded in the corridors of the District and Se-ssions Judge's Court, Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court and the CMM courts. Soon after the blast, the judges and magistrates left their seats adjourning the proceedings.

One bomb was recovered unexploded

Dhaka District Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that the blasts were designed to create panic. He suggested setting up closed circuit cameras in the area.

Metropolitan Sessions Judge (incharge) Shamsul Alam Khan said tight security should be maintained on the court premises. Courts should be free from terrorism, he added.

CMM Jalal Ahmed said he has sent a letter to the home ministry for ensuring security in the court area

After the abduction, victim Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, a

UND adds: The government of eastern Indian state of West Bengal districts following a series of blasts in What happened to the victim later is

alert has been in force in the state The Rab took Shahid into a five-day

After staying tight-lipped on the first day, Shahid Chairman yesterday

quizzing, the Rab officials said. When contacted Rab-7 Bangla border. Our Staff Correspondent adds: Commander Colonel Kazi Emdadul Chinese Vice-Premier Huang Ju has

and were preparing for the next course of action accordingly. The Rab commander, however, did

not disclose the details of what Shahid

elect the president who has already been 'chosen', the aspirant for the post said.

FROM PAGE 16 Nizam's brother Maruf Nizam as the mastermind of the abduction. the US Embassy said, they strongly condemn the bomb blasts that occurred throughout Bangladesh yesterday morning and extend their condolences to the families and friends of those who were injured or