

No scope for extremism in the name of Islam

Stresses PM, assures businessmen of actions against bombers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Export-oriented garment and textile sector leaders yesterday told the prime minister that most of the prospective foreign buyers have cancelled their recent scheduled visits to Bangladesh due to the August 17 countrywide blasts.

They said buyers are observing the post-bombing scenario cautiously and are likely to shift their focus from Bangladesh to other alternative markets for their outsourcing destinations if the situation worsens.

The leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers

and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), who called on the PM at her office, urged her to take immediate steps to arrest the perpetrators of the explosions.

The prime minister told them the government will take immediate steps to arrest the offenders and take stern actions against them.

"Bangladesh is a moderate Muslim country and there is no scope for practising extremism in the name of Islam," sources quoted the prime minister as saying.

She added that the blasts were made at a time when Bangladesh is making good progress in attaining desired economic growth and attracting foreign investment.

The textile sector leaders, expressing their anxiety, said if the offenders cannot be identified and go unpunished, the situation would go out of control.

The three premier apparel sector bodies called upon the government and the main opposition to work together for upholding the country's image amid this crisis.

Khaleda also urged the leaders of the opposition parties to work together for identifying the "enemies of the nation."

The textile sector leaders have plans to arrange a dialogue between Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina to discuss the national crisis emanating from the August 17

blasts, sources said.

Earlier at a joint press conference of the three organisations, BGMEA President Annisul Huq said recurrence of such bombings may label Bangladesh as a terrorism-prone country and can even link it to international terrorism.

"The government and the opposition parties must come forward to identify the culprits and punish them, giving up the blame-game practice," BKMEA President Fazlul Haque said, reading out a joint statement at the press conference.

Such destructive activities will not only hamper smooth production at factories, affecting the country's overall exports, but will also

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Charge sheet in Aug 21 carnage case soon

Bhuiyan tells party rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The charge sheet in the August 21 grenade attacks on an Awami League (AL) rally last year will be submitted in a few days, BNP Secretary General and LGRD

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JS session begins on Sept 8

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsads goes into its routine session on September 8 to meet the constitutional obligation, ignoring demands for a special session to discuss the August 17 countrywide bomb attacks.

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday summoned the 19th session of the House at 5:00pm. The

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PHOTO: STAR

Ruling BNP holds a rally at Muktagan in the capital yesterday to protest against the August 17 countrywide bomb blasts.

INSIDE THE MILITANT GROUPS-3

Extremists get trained in armed combat

ZAYADUL AHSAN

On January 22, 2001, Chittagong police held Salumullah Selim, a 45-year-old man, from a residence in the port city. On interrogation, they learned the true nature of his identity -- he is the army chief of an Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO). Records showed he was previously arrested in 2000.

More quizzing brought out further startling information. He

admitted to police that he trained local madrasa students in armed combat. According to him, more trainers from African and Middle Eastern countries frequently visit Bangladesh to train local Islamist militants.

Away in the forest of Bandarban, police followed a narrow trail through rows of betel nut trees. The forest, about 25km from the town, was dense and dark. One had to walk for two and a half hours and cross two streams and hillocks to reach a

thatched structure. The hut is a madrasa. Boys take religious lessons during the day; night turns it into a militant camp to train the same madrasa students in arms and explosives.

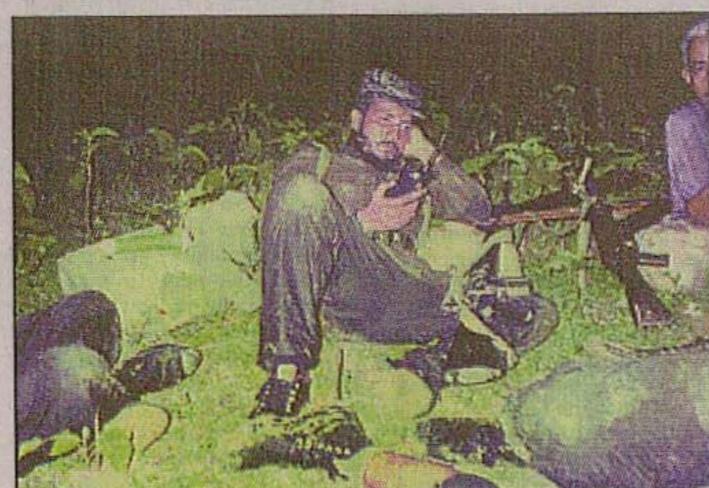
This was one of the many madrasas that militants use as training centres. Three of them were sealed by the government after police raids found dummy rifles for training. They have mustered enough capability to create a dangerous situation, a Special Branch

report in 2003 warned.

A more revealing comment came from Sayed Kawsar Husain Siddiki, chairman of now banned militant group Shahadat Al Hizma. On February 8, 2003, he said in a press conference in Rajshahi that Hizma arranges arms training to its members.

"Our commando fighters can conduct an attack at any place in 24 hours," Kawsar boasted. He was later arrested in a sedition case for

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FILE PHOTO

Abandoned equipment and signboard of a fake farm project, left, at a militant hideout in remote Mulatali area under Hathaizari upazila in Chittagong; file photo of a militant training camp, right, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Morshed has no info about US expert in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreign ministry has no knowledge about the arrival of any US explosives expert in Dhaka to assist the intelligence agencies in investigating the August 17 serial bomb blasts.

According to newspaper reports, US explosives expert James Dalton Telfer came to Dhaka on Sunday to assist the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI).

When asked, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said, "I have no knowledge about this... I saw it in the newspaper."

He said the foreign ministry has

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TWO DISTS IN KHULNA

Massive hunt for blasts coordinator

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers have started a massive hunt to nab a man, who coordinated the bomb attacks in two districts of Khulna division, an investigator said.

Soon after four arrestees mentioned his name during interrogation at the JIC (Joint Interrogation Cell), members of law enforcement and intelligence agencies started operation to trap him.

"It will be a significant progress in investigation if the arrestees can identify the coordinator," the investigator said.

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possibly the coordinator has already been nabbed and is on way to Dhaka.

He would be presented before the four arrestees to verify him and his role in the August 17 blasts.

The source said two arrestees from Sathkira and two others from Kushtia admitted at the JIC the man was in charge of coordination and was supplying bombs.

"It will be a significant progress in investigation if the arrestees can identify the coordinator," the investigator said.

Desa employee gunned down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals gunned down a Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (Desa) employee and wounded another in front of the Desa office at Lalbagh yesterday.

Abdul Khalek, 55, a driver of Desa, was handing over the keys to his vehicle to the on-duty driver Touhidur Rahman Munna in front of their office at Noor Fattah Lane when an unknown youth shot them both at around 3:30pm.

"I was taking the keys when the youth, aged around 30, wearing a shirt and trousers, aimed a pistol at Khalek," said injured Touhidur.

"The youth shot Khalek in the

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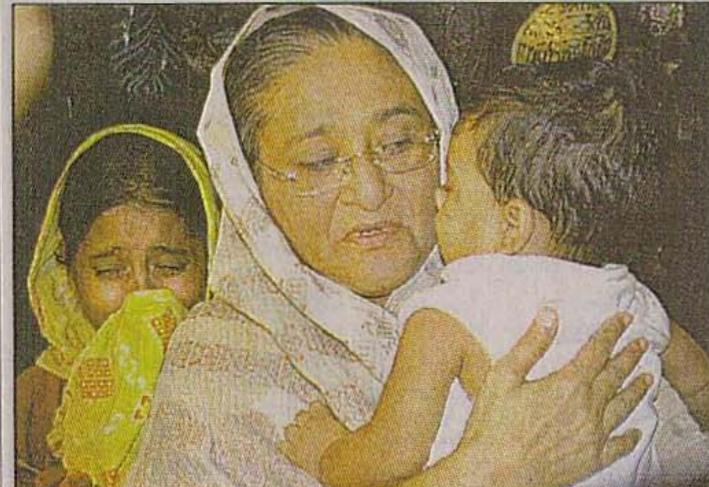


PHOTO: STAR

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina holds the baby of Belal Hossain, killed in August 21 grenade attacks, while his wife, left, wails as they met Hasina yesterday.

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AUG 21 BLASTS
Hasina demands int'l probe

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina has once again demanded a fair and neutral international investigation into the August 21 grenade attacks on her rally.

"As the government had complicity in the grenade attack, it destroyed all the evidence and didn't help the foreign investigation teams," she alleged.

Hasina made the pungent remarks when the family members of those slain and critically injured in the August 21, 2004 grenade attacks on the Awami League (AL)

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