

Close watch on
Qatar-based
NGO linked
to Ahab

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Following information that the Qatar Charitable Society, with its station at Alambiditor under Gangachhara upazila in the district, is organising orphan youths and children in the region to prepare them for Jihad (Islamic war), intelligence agencies have kept the organisation under close observation.

The activities of the organisation, formerly a unit of Al Haramaine, a

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Saddam says
he'd sacrifice
his life for
Arab cause

REUTERS, Amman

Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has said in a letter he would sacrifice himself for Arab nationalism and to end foreign occupation.

The International Committee of the Red Cross delivered the letter, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters, on Sunday to a Jordanian friend of Saddam who declined to be named.

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Prayer Timing

August 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-33	6-36
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

AUG 17 BLASTS

Intelligence agencies failed for politicisation

Prothom Alo roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicisation and recruitment not always on professional basis, among other reasons, over the years have crippled the intelligence agencies, which failed miserably to gather any prior leads about the August 17 serial blasts, experts said yesterday.

Stressing the need for immediate depoliticisation of the agencies, security experts suggested transparent recruitment, proper tasking, and adequate equipping of the agencies to ensure national security.

Describing Wednesday's attack as the last warning to act against the rise of religious extremism, experts at a roundtable discussion on national security in the wake of the nationwide blasts asked political parties to reach a national consensus to resist extremism and militancy.

National daily The Prothom Alo arranged the discussion at its office, which was moderated by Editor of the daily, Motur Rahman.

Successive governments over the years have exploited the intelli-

gence agencies for their own political purpose, said former inspector general of police (IGP) ASM Shahjahan. He said the agencies have to serve the interest of the government, not the state and the people.

The former police chief pointed out that in addition to an opaque recruitment process, outdated training, lack of equipment and other logistics have contributed to the inefficiency of the agencies. He said several proposals were given

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7 to die for killing
businessman

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced seven people to death and 10 others to life imprisonment for killing Enamul Haq Ratan, owner of Haq Fisheries and Poultry Farm, at Keraniganj 10 years ago.

Judge Kamrul Hossain Mollah of the Fifth Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, handed down the verdict in a packed courtroom.

Those awarded death penalty are

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Cop held for
extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police constable was arrested yesterday as he was caught for his attempt to extort money from a businessman at Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Constable Mohammad Shahjahan of Rajabagh Police Lines demanded Tk 5,000 from Shahin Ripon, owner of Victor Electronics, at the east gate of the stadium at 11:30am.

"I got off from a rickshaw in front of the Pubali Bank at the east gate of

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Govt gives nod
to pipeline to
link Bibiyana with
national grid

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

The US company Unocal has got the government approval to set up a 46-kilometre pipeline to link its Bibiyana gas field with the national grid line, officials said.

The prime minister has approved a proposal to acquire 50 acres of land in Moulvibazar and Habiganj in this

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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 Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said at a rally in the capital yesterday.

"We have already collected a lot of evidence and the attackers will certainly be brought to trial," Bhuiyan said brushing aside AL allegations that the probe into the incident is yet to be completed.

The main opposition party did not cooperate in the investigation,

rather it tried to damage evidence in the grenade blasts and other bomb attacks, the BNP leader alleged at the rally held at Muktagan protest against the August 17 nationwide bomb attacks, organised by the city BNP.

Both local and foreign investigators probed the grenade attacks but the AL did not cooperate and also refused to allow investigators to examine party chief Sheikh Hasin's car, the minister mentioned.

On the hartal enforced by the AL and its allies on Saturday, Bhuiyan said the shutdown created scopes for perpetrators of the August 17 bomb blasts to hide. "The hartal was

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Spurious chemicals seized at Mitford

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday fined five wholesale traders of spurious chemicals and essences in the Mitford medicine market in the city.

The restaurant owners and bakers have long been using unknown chemicals in different food items to allure people. The court also seized some unlabeled chemicals.

"Everyone we apprehended with unknown chemicals has told us they buy it from the Mitford market. So we conducted a drive over there," said Md. Rokan Ud Doula, the magistrate of the court.

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Curb on car imports by lawmakers

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bad news for the 45 would-be women lawmakers of the Jatiya Sangsad's reserved seats as the National Board of Revenue (NBR) has curtailed some facilities of the members of parliament.

An NBR circular yesterday said all new MPs will be allowed to import one duty-free car, but the tenure of parliament must be at least two years from the day of their oath.

The eighth parliament, which went into its first session on October 28, 2001, has only 14 months left of its tenure. The election to the women's reserved seats in parliament is due on September 6.

The NBR for the first time has also limited the category of vehicles -- 3,000cc for jeeps and 1,650cc for cars.

The revenue watchdog imposed the restriction as many MPs used to import expensive high horsepower vehicles and sell those, depriving the government of huge revenue, said NBR sources.

Generally, the overall import duty, customs duty, supplementary duty and value added tax for vehicles stand at 160 percent.

A number of MPs had allegedly sold the receipts issued by the Parliament Secretariat for importing duty-free vehicles for personal interest.

The NBR move will now deprive

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