### Militants, lawmen

some Islamist extremists were still holed up in those areas.

"The militants used to rent houses there, but recently they have moved to other places." Lieutenant Colonel Gulzaruddin Ahmed, director of Rab intelligence wing, told The Daily Star.

Rab sources said some of the militants shifted on August 19, some in the first week of September while others on September 8, the day AHM Shamim, son of former ameer of the Habiganj district Jamaat-e-Islami, was arrested in Habiganj.

Meanwhile, Rab vesterday started interrogating six people, five of whom were arrested at an East Bashabo house with firearms, CDs, and huge bomb making materials.

The five are Noor Azam alias Yasir, Aleya Ferdousi alias Ayesha, Akramul Islam, Belal Hossain, and Mohammad Zakaria. The other person being quizzed is the Jamaat leader's son

All six arrestees under interrogation said Ataur Rahman alias Hassan alias Sunny, brother of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdur Rahman, was behind the blasts in the capital on August 17. They said they only know the people who used to live at the East Bashabo house, said a Rab official wishing anonymity

They said they never tried to know the identity and whereabouts of the people in the top echelon of JMB as such attempts are considered a punishable offence in the group. The arrestees have so far named five to seven others as suspects in the nearsimultaneous explosions, added the Rab official

The Rab members yesterday collected CDs from Sabujbagh Police Station after a seizure list was pre-

"So far, we have found that the CDs contain training manuals, motivational words on jihad and pictures of the Afghan War," said the Rab official, adding that they will look into the CDs more elaborately and carefully.

Meanwhile, DB police raided a number of houses in South Goran yesterday morning following a tip-off that two militants were hiding there.

"We did not find the two militants as they had left the place well before we could start the raids at 11:00am," said Shafiqul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of DB.

The raids that lasted for about four hours were carried out also on at least eight tin-shed houses situated on the opposite side of the building from

materials were recovered on Thursday. But the law enforcers could

not recover anything or arrest anyone. A special DB team was quizzing Shammi Akhter and domestic help Lokman. The two, who were arrested at the South Goran house, gave the interrogators information about some

'We are cross-checking the leads we've obtained from the arrestees." a top DB official said on condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, police seized some more Islamic books from the South Goran house yesterday, two days after the seizure of bombs and explosive

"We have sealed off the house. The investigation officer (IO) went to the house today for investigation and found the books," said the DBADC.

Moreover, DB police were interrogating Abdullah, who was picked up by Sabujbagh police from the East Bashabo house while he was burning a diary on Friday. Ataur used to fre

quent the house. Sources in the DB said Abdullah has not yet been shown arrested in any case. He told the interrogators that he was burning his personal diary without any intention

#### SUSPECTARRESTED Police yesterday arrested

Rahmatullah, yet another suspect in the countrywide blasts, in the city's Badda area.

Badda police raided Rahmatullah's house and made the arrest, suspecting him to be JMB operations comnderAtaurRahman, police said.

They said their suspicions were aroused as the house used to be frequented by Abdul Mannan, a JMB leader and Khatib of a local mosque. who had stopped coming to the mosque since August 17.

"Taking Rahmatullah with us. we have raided different places to arrest Mannan, but in vain," said the officercharge of Badda Police Station. **MAGURA** 

Our Magura correspondent reports: Magura Police yesterday recovered from Sadar Hospital a bomb identical to those used in the serial blasts.

Tipped off, the policemen recovered the bomb, which was dumped at the emergency gate of the hospital at about 11:30am. Meanwhile. Kushtia was put on red

alert vesterday amid fears that JMB militants might launch fresh attacks on

# Govt hospitals turn

emergency departments, which includes consultation with physicians, have been raised from Tk 5 to Tk 10 while the admission fee has been raised from Tk 5.50 to Tk 20.

The normal bed rent in hospital wards has been raised by more than 150 percent from Tk 78 to Tk 200 while the rent of cabins of different categories has been raised from Tk 145 to Tk 300 and from Tk 265 to Tk 300. The rent for air-conditioned cabins has risen to Tk 700 from the previous rate of Tk 615.

Of the imaging tests, each single exposure X-ray test will now cost Tk 100 instead of the previous Tk 20.

The rate for each ultrasonography test has been raised from Tk 110 to Tk 220 while each CT Scan test (normal) has been raised from Tk 2000 to Tk 2500 and CT Scan (brain) test from Tk 2000 to Tk 3500.

The rate for electrocardiography (ECG) has been raised to Tk 150 from the previous Tk 76.

Various pathological investigations like blood, urine, stool, blood sugar and other biochemical tests will also be costlier. The average increase of individual test varies from ten to 100 percent, depending on the type of examinations.

Meals served in paving beds used to cost Tk 25 per patient; the new rate has been increased to Tk

The increase in rates has led to repercussions especially among the patients and their attendants.

Assuming that the inflated rates were not vet official, many patients and their attendants yesterday protested at the rent collector's

office of Dhaka Medical College and

Hospital as they found the circular hung in the hospital administration block for public notice. The increase in the charges has

hit hard many patients already Abu Taher, 48, a private security

personnel admitted for electric burn in paying bed in ward No. 8 on August 10, said he will not be able to afford to pay these extra fees.

"I have borrowed money to pay my bed rent of Tk 78 daily. I heard that the new rent for paying bed has been raised to Tk 200, which is beyond my capacity. I might have to sell my ancestral land to pay the extra costs." he said

Shah Alam, another patient with infected swollen left leg in the same ward, also expressed similar anger saying he has no extra budget to pay the additional cost of the bed

"I had a fixed budget to cover hospital bed rent and other necessary day-to-day costs and doctors said it will take me a week to heal. It now seems that I may not be able to avail my treatment here as the bed rent has gone beyond my capacity, he said.

Zeba, 18, admitted in a paying bed under obstetric and gynaecology department, also expressed her inability to pay the increased bed

Patients admitted in the nonpaving beds are also in confusion as the official notice mentioned nothing about the non-paying beds.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the fourth class employees' union yesterday said they will meet on September 12 to decide whether to go for any protest or demonstration against the government decision.

exporters in Bangladesh when we are struggling to survive in the quota-free regime," said Fazlul Huq, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

"We are lagging behind another day as we will not get the services of banks, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and other government offices

BGMEA, BKMEA and other exportoriented industries kept their secre-

tariat and offices open yesterday. According to sources, business leaders at a hurriedly-called meeting on Thursday urged Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury to take steps to keep the EPB open

on Saturday. The business leaders explained to the commerce minister how the two-day weekly holiday will affect the industries, urging him to convey the message to the top decision-

Dokan Malik Samity (BDMS) urged the government to review the weekly holiday, saying instead of having a positive impact on the economy, it will seriously damage the businesses.

Keeping banks, government offices and business houses closed for two days will help the nation to save Tk 180 crore, but businesses will have to bear much more as interest of their loans if the banks remain closed on the 52 Saturdays

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) has requested the government to consider its decision, urging to make the weekly holiday on Sunday.

The capital yesterday was free of traffic jam as a considerable number of public buses, taxicabs and rickshaws did not ply the city roads.

"I already find it difficult to repay my instalments of bank loans reqularly due to low turnover. The problem will be more acute in the coming days as my income goes down substantially on weekly holiday, Abdul Karim, a taxicab driver, said.

#### Cops rescue 3

FROM PAGE 16

Mannan Chhaiyal alias Alam, 28, Delwar Hossain, 18, and Din Islam, 30, from a house near Mouchak Market and rescued the child.

Abductors kidnapped Rifat by promising him cricket bat and ball when he was playing in front of his house at 12:30pm on Friday. The abductors then called Rifat's

father Aminul Islam on mobile and asked Tk 70,000 as ransom for the elease of his son. Informed, Badda police arrested

Nazrul when he was fleeing the area with Rifat by a rickshaw at 3:15pm the same day.

Following his lead, police later nabbed two other abductors, Mithu and Masum, from the area.

Rashed went missing from his Pradhangram village under Kotwali Police Station in Barisal on August 31 and his father filed a general diary with the same police station.

The abductors called his father Mostafiz and asked him to go to Sadarghat with Tk 50,000 as ransom for his son's release on September 8.

As Mostafiz did not give the money, the kidnappers raised the ransom to Tk 1 lakh and asked him to go to the same spot on Friday evening. Plainclothes Rab men took posi-

tion in the area while Mostafiz was waiting there. When the abductors brought Rashed, he yelled for help seeing his

Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the kidnappers fled the scene leaving Rashed.

#### BSF

FROM PAGE 1

The BSF at the meeting asked the BDR to submit documents and photographs of the victims proving their dentities. It would take time to return the bodies as they are in the custody of ndian police, the BSF added.

Deputy Commander Major Sheikh Mahmudul Haque of BDR 1 Battalion said they have already sent documents and photographs of three

victims to the BSF. The three victims are Muzammel Hague Bhuivan alias Mozailla, 35, and Abdur Razzak, 31, of Kuripaika village and Mohammad Alam, 32, of Abdullapur village in Akhaura upazila. The fourth victim could not be identified until vesterday

The BSF picked up the four in Bangladesh territory on Hirapur border in the early hours Friday and handed them over to an Indian mob. who lynched them.

Two BSF men were killed on April 16 this year during a robbery attempt inside Bangladesh territory. Sources said the BSF branded Mozailla a notorious criminal and announced a bounty of Tk 50,000 on him for playing a key role on behalf of Bangladeshi nationals in that incident

The sources said Mozailla was a motorcycle smuggler and was accused in a murder case.

His brother Abu Nesar, 45, suspects Bangladeshi or Indian locals took him along with his accomplices along the border and lynched them there. Mozailla's wife Bilkis Akhter also filed a case with Akhaura Police Station against a few locals.

She accused Hashem Bhuiyan, Kazal Bhuiyan, Sahjahan Bhuiyan, Hafiz Mia, Yasin Mia, Kazal and some others of the murders

#### 2 criminals killed

FROM PAGE 16

Our Chittagong staff correspondent reports, notorious robber Badiul Alam alias Badi Dakat, an accused in nine criminal cases including five for robbery, was killed in "cross-fire" at Boalkhali upazila in Chittagong in the early hours yesterday.

According to sources, the Rab-7 lay in an ambush in the city's Muradour area at around 2:00pm on Friday on information that Badi and his accomplices will turn up there.

The elite force members held Badi and three of his accomplices Md Abu Tayab, Farhad alias Farid, and Farid from Sholak Bahar near Muradpur intersection with four firearms and three bullets.

Badi carried out robberies with the blessings of three local Union Parishad (UP) chairmen--Md Idris of Kadurkhil, Nurul Alam of Charandwip, and Azizul Haq of Kharandwip, the arrested accomplices of Badi told journalists at the

Rab-7 headquarters. The robbers told an interrogation at the Rab-7 headquarters in Patenga that the other gang members were waiting at a place under Shakpura union of Boalkhali upazila to commit robbery.

A Rab squad took Badi to Shakpura at around 2:00am when Badi's accomplices opened fire on the Rab members prompting Rab retaliation. At one stage Badi tried to flee and fell in the "line of fire" receiv-

Badi was rushed to local health complex where the physicians declared him dead, said the

The Rab retrieved three guns and eight cartridges from the spot.

#### Businessman FROM PAGE 1

around 12:30am.

They called the victim out to his courtyard and shot him from close range killing him on the spot. Locals said Zahir had been

giving death threats to the victim for the last two years for Nazim refused to marry his daughter off to Zahir.

Nazim had lodged a General Diary (GD) in this connection with the concerned police station, sources said.

A case was filed with Satkania

## Returning home

The women, who were given assurance of 400 rials as monthly salary, had to pay Tk 35,000 each to recruiting agencies for arranging their travel to Saudi Arabia.

While officials of Ansar-VDP, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and recruiting agency officials said that the women returned mainly because they could not adjust with the environment and felt homesick, the accounts of the returnees show a different picture. When Sultana Akter, 19, daugh-

ter of Mukteruddin of Netrakona, arrived in Ma-Hawa-Maktab, a Saudi Arabia branch office of Akbar Enterprise, a recruiting agency based in Dhaka, she was taken to the house of an Arab named Ahammad on July 27.

As soon as she reached the house, her mistress ordered her to wash clothes.

When Sultana said she was very tired and hungry after the long travel, the callous mistress started

Sultana had to wash clothes and then go to bed in an empty stomach, as she was not given any food, she told The Daily Star. Minutes after Sultana's going to

bed, her employer locked the room's door from outside. At midnight Ahammad entered the room and attempted to rape her,

Sultana said, adding, "Despite my strong resistance, he almost unclothed me, but I cried and managed to leave the room and took shelter at the room of the

mistress," she said. The employer then beat her with a stick and took her to Ma-Hawa-Maktab the next morning.

There she found Ansar-VDP members Farhana, 18, of Habiganj and Lipi, 19, of Tangail, who were brought there to be sent back home as they did not agree to their employers' proposal for having physical relationship, Sultana said.

Confining them for four days,

employees of Ma-Hawa-Maktab

tortured them for "wanting to come back without completing their 3-year The employees kept the Ansar-VDP members' signatures on pieces of white paper and sent them

to Dhaka by Bangladesh Biman on "I am an unmarried girl, and my

father is a poor man. I want stern action and compensation." said Sultana, who recently met State

the matter. Sultana's colleague Selina Sultana Ranu of Khulna also returned home on August 27.

Selina, who was in service only

for three days, told The Daily Star

that her employer Rashed in Riyadh

Minister for Home Lutfozzaman

Babar and appealed for looking into

wanted to use her as a prostitute. "As I refused, my master beat me brutally and sent me to jail with the help of the recruiting agency (that sent her to the KSA)," she said, adding that the agency sent her to

Meanwhile, Ansar-VDP member Rani Akter of Thakurgaon, who went to Saudi Arabia, recently wrote to her mother that she, along with many other Ansar-VDP members, is spending a tough time in Saudi Arabia.

Bangladesh after one month.

There are allegations that the employers do not give them adequate food, do not pay them, and even torture them physically when they ask for it.

Although Ansar-VDP Deputy Director Golam Kibria said he forwarded the complaints to Akbar Enterprise, the recruiting agency's Managing Director Akbar Hossain Monju denied their having any branch office named Ma-Hawa-Maktab in Riyadh, and said he is not aware of any such complaints.

Meanwhile, Golam Kibria said there is now very little possibility of proving the allegations as the returnees did not immediately inform about their sexual harassment to the Saudi authorities.

Bangladesh Embassy in Saudi Arabia is investigating the matter and measures will be taken in light of the agreements between the recruiting agencies and the employers if the allegations are proved, he

The Ansar-VDP department has not informed anything about the issue, State Minister for Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Major (retd) Quamrul Islam said, adding that he will look into the matter as soon as his ministry gets official information about it.

### Grim search

nelping clear the backlog. The receding waters are expected to reveal a grim human toll of what could still amount to thousands of bodies of those killed by the flooding that displaced around one million people when Hurricane Katrina struck on August

were also set to get a boost from a team of German experts as life slowly returned to normal in subless damaged by the hurri-

Efforts to drain the flooded city

With thousands still in New Orleans and reluctant to abandon their homes, officials said they would not yet use force to get people to leave the city.

On the political front, there was no let up in the pressure on federal authorities and the administration of George W. Bush over the initial handling of the catastrophe. The head of national agency

overseeing disaster relief became

the first political casualty in the crisis when it was announced that he was being replaced on the ground by a Coast Guard vice admiral Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff told journalists in Louisiana state capital Baton

Rouge that Federal Emergency Management Agency director Michael Brown was to be recalled to Washington. He would be replaced at ground zero by Vice Admiral Thad Allen,

Chertoff said, while defending Brown's record. "Hurricane Katrina will go down as the largest natural disaster in American history and Mike has done everything he possibly could to coordinate the federal response

to this unprecedented challenge, he said. Brown had resisted calls to resign over the sluggish federal response to the disaster in which hundreds are feared to have died and billions of dollars' worth of damage sustained to property and

infrastructure. Under-fire Bush had notably stood up for Brown in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane, telling him: "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job.

But critics' arguments that the hurricane's grim aftermath was a disaster waiting to happen and that

#### Six killed

FROM PAGE 16 Dhaka-Sylhet highway in

The identity of the dead could not be known. Ten of the injured were admitted to Narsingdi General Hospital while the rest to Prime General Hospital in the town.

Meherpara area of the district.

at Lalbagh in Sadar upazila at about 2:30pm left three people dead and 25 others injured. The identity of the dead could not

In Comilla, a bus-truck collision

be known. Of the injured, six were admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital while the remaining 19 given first the national response could have been better planned were reinforced when a year-old document from Brown's own agency came to The document outlined a sce-

nario of one million evacuees and

up to 350,000 left homeless in the event of a hurricane hitting New Orleans. It was made public by opposition Democrats It explained that a hurricane of between category three and five hitting Louisiana would create "a would not be able to cope without

states and the federal govern-Katrina was rated as a category four hurricane when it made land-

massive help from neighbouring

State and federal emergency management officials "believe that the gravity of the situation calls for an extraordinary level of advance planning to improve government readiness to respond effectively to

It recognised that "standing water and diseases could threaten public health," and that there would be severe economic reper-

cussions for the state and region." New Orleans itself has taken on the air of a ghost town -- its oncevibrant streets completely deserted save for the thousands of police and military conducting house-to-house searches.

The operation to recover the bloated bodies of those killed in the disaster, which struck the Gulf Coast more than a week ago, also began in earnest.

But Terry Ebbert, the director of homeland security for New Orleans, told reporters that so far the number of bodies being recovered did not tally with comments by Mayor Ray Nagin that up to 10,000 people may have been killed.

### Indian police

was summoned to the office of the police superintendent, Sylhet, vesterday to show cause why he released the detained persons without informing the higher authorities concerned.

On the other hand, a team led by Captain Mamun, was sent to the spot from BDR 21 Battalion Headquarters yesterday morning to probe how 14 Bangladeshi nationals illegally entered India. Border sources said the

Bangladeshi nationals entered Dauki Bazar in India in search of lorries at as many as 20 points work, dodging the BDR members. between the city's Kachpur and

#### Cop injured FROM PAGE 16

returned fire. The SI received two bullets in his abdomen and chest during the hour-long battle. The gangsters, however, made

their escape. Mahir was first taken to Meherpur General Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka as his condition deteriorated.

#### Loan defaults

FROM PAGE 1 contributed to the swelling default

A Sonali Bank source said there is no improvement in the recovery of the state-owned enterprises' loans.

The default loans of the NCBs stood at 10.226 crore in June 05 which in December 04 was Tk 9.955 crore. However, against the increase in the outstanding loan, the default loan has shrunk to 2 percent, coming down by 1.3 percentage points.

The volume of the default loan in most of the PCBs has increased. A Bangladesh Bank (BB) source said the default loan has risen in some PCBs due to their internal mismanagement. For instance, Premier Bank's default loan was Tk 7 crore in December 04, which has gown to Tk 43 crore in June 05.

Their alleged indulgence in a share scam is largely responsible for

However, the close watch of the central bank, as well as some of the endeavours of problem banks - like Pubali, City, UCBL - have resulted in cutting down their default loans.

Among the Islami banks, only Al Arafah has managed to reduce its default loan.

The PCBs had Tk 4,194 crore in default loans in December 04 which rose to Tk 4,351 crore in June 05. However, though the volume of the default loan has risen, compared to their outstanding loan the amount is rather small, 7.76 percent.

In June 05 the total default loan of the FCBs was 125 crore or 1.54 percent of the outstanding loan of Tk 8,125 crore.

Default loans of the DFIs have reduced by 7 percentage points and stood at Tk 3.740 crore in June 05. The reason is Bangladesh Shilpa Bank and Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha are hardly giving any new loans. Instead, they have concentrated on recovering their default loans in recent times.

However in June 05, when the gross default loan was 15.79 percent. the net default loan was rather low at 8.11 percent. Since the banks provisioning has risen against the default loan, the net default loan has therefore decreased, a BB source said. Net default is considered the standard of determining bad assets internationally, the source added.

### Khulna gas

FROM PAGE 1 industrialisation of the southwestern region of the country, he said Bangladesh is facing tough competition from global economic point of view and we must work hard to face this competition

He said the government has taken firm steps to stop wastage and smuggling of petroleum products. Corrupt officials of the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation are being severely dealt with, he Our talks with India over tri-

nation gas pipeline are gradually progressing, he said. Emphasising the role of both print and electronic media in uplifting the country's economy. ahmudur advised local iournalists to correctly identify the factors creating hurdles in the way of eco-

nomic development of Khulna. Khulna Press Club Secretary Faruque Ahmed and Khulna Union of Journalists President Makbul Hossain Mintoo attended the meet-

#### ing among others. Freight transport

FROM PAGE 1 reduction in all kinds of taxes, bridge tolls, and ferry fares to bring down

the overall cost of goods transport. "Fuel prices have been increased for the eighth time in four years, while different operational expenses in freight transport like taxes, fees, prices of vehicle parts too have been hiked up in the recent years," said Rustam Ali Khan, convenor of Bangladesh Truck-Covered Van-Tank Lorry-Long Vehicle Transport Agency Owners and Workers Unity Council.

goods transport rose abnormally high due to frequent price hikes while the transport fares remain unchanged," he observed while reading out a written statement. It will be hard for the freight transport industry to survive if the government refuses to reduce the

present fuel prices as 80 percent of

the operational cost of goods trans-

"The operational cost of the

port depend on energy prices, said Rustam Ali Khan. "There is no alternative but to slash the operational cost as a mechanism has vet to be developed in fixing fares for the goods transport, said Marcos Gomez, member secretary of the council.

Dhaka Divisional Tank Lorry Owners Association's Joint Convenor Jalal U Zaman stressed the need for stopping the police harassment to lower the operational cost for goods transport. "For no reason police stop our

Tongi," he alleged. The freight transport owners and workers also called for adequate truck terminals to be set up in the capital as well as district towns. They emphasised the impor-

and robberies on the highways. Tofazzal Hossain, Saidul Haque Abdul Motaleb, SA Barakat, Ayub Khan, and Makbul Ahmed, among others, spoke at the press confer-

tance of curbing rampant extortion

## World leaders meet

Middle East peace road map; comprehensive reform of the UN; reform of the Security Council; supporting the establishment of a new UN body a Peacebuilding Commission; mass destruction of all biological, chemical and nuclear weapons; extending full support for the global fight against terrorism; enhanced ODA; making development propoor, pro-environment, pro-equality and pro-women: rights of women. children, social development; peace

and security and human rights. Besides, the Bangladesh delegation will engage fully on areas of priority for the country, including those where Summit follow-up action is needed.

According to a UN statement, over a billion people still live in extreme poverty, and 20,000 die from preventable causes every day. Terrorism affects all parts of the world, from the richest to the poorest, amid the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Large parts of humanity are affected by civil war and human rights continue to be violated throughout the world.

Major new pledges on aid, especially by European Union countries, and on writing off \$40 billion in poorcountry debt, announced at the July Group of 8 meeting in the run-up to the World Summit, have given an added lift to the anti-poverty effort

to strengthen the United Nations human rights machinery. In addition to a new Human Rights Council that would replace the discredited Commission on

The spotlight is also on reforms

Human Rights, delegations are considering proposals that would bolster the budget and capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Annan's report, a kind of blue-

print for the Summit, contained key recommendations on poverty, security and human rights, including increasing official development assistance by developed countries to 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP).It called for tackling climate change, noting that the Kyoto Protocol containing binding targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions only extends until 2012. and for a comprehensive antiterrorism treaty, defining terrorism as any act intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants and intimidate a population or coerce a government

or international organisation. The report also urged the creation of two new bodies, a UN Peacebuilding Council to help countries emerging from conflict, and a more powerful Human Rights Council elected by the General Assembly to replace the current Geneva-based Commission on Human Rights.

Other recommendations included establishing a democracy fund, expanding the Security Council from its current 15 members to 24 and streamlining the UN Secretariat. If acted on, the proposals would mark the most dramatic change in the UN's functioning ever

### Saifur off to US

meetings of the WB and IMF slated for September 24-25. Besides, he is expected to meet a number of US congressmen during the visit.

Before leaving Dhaka yesterday Saifur told reporters at Zia International Airport that he would attempt to persuade the rich countries for allocating enough funds as they had pledged earlier, so that the developing countries can implement the MDGs.

The developing countries failed

to achieve the MDG targets due to

the lack of fund as well as institu-

tional weakness, lack of good governance and corruption. A source said Saifur is going to raise the issue of tagging hard conditions by the donor agencies while giving loans to the developing countries like Bangladesh, which makes it difficult for the governments to implement the poverty

reduction programme in their respective countries. He will try to make them understand how difficult it becomes for a democratic government to fulfil

those conditions in the given sociopolitical circumstances. In his meetings with WB and IMF xecutives. Saifur is going apprise them of the various reform programmes the government has undertaken, including initiatives to improve law and order situation,

eradicate corruption and facilitate good governance. He will also try to persuade the WB to release the third tranche of Development Support Credit, as well as make sure that the next instalment of IMF's PRGF loan is

available on time. Besides, the finance minister during his meeting with the US congressmen will ask for more access for the Bangladeshi products to the US market. Saifur will urge the four donor

agencies led by the WB, who are

participating in the implementation

of the government's Poverty

Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP),

officials of the UK Department For International Development (DFID) in London on his way back home for the same purpose.

to relax their tough conditions like

administrative and judicial reforms.

He is expected to meet high

14-party FROM PAGE 1 Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil told a press briefing at the party central office vesterday. Jalil briefed the journalists about

the decision after a joint meeting of the senior leaders of AL, the components of the 11-Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party But CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim told The Daily Star last night that the party will observe the hartal on September 18 'We don't see any reason to shift the

hartal due to the Queen's Baton Relay as the demands we have placed are more crucial than the Commonwealth The Al leader said the Queen's Baton Relay, which started from the Buckingham Palace in March this year with a message of the Queen, is scheduled to cross September 18. "The relay will end in Melbourne ahead of the Common-

wealth Games, crossing all member states of the Commonwealth," Jalil Another reason for shifting the hartal is the observance of Shab-e-Barat which falls on the night of

Earlier on September 7, the main-

stream opposition parties announced the hartal demanding withdrawal of recent fuel price hike and the government's alleged patronage to the Islamist militants in the country.

September 19, he added.

The 14 opposition parties will also stage countrywide demonstrations today and tomorrow. Awami League leaders Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Obaidul Quader, Workers Party leader Bimal Biswas and JSD

leader Syed Zafar Sazzad were

among others, present at the briefing.

# Americans mark 9/11

the same.

consensus.

FROM PAGE 16 But the country commemorating September 11 this year will not be

Its celebrated war on terror is

officially billed as more of an ideo-

logical struggle with Islamic extrem-

ists: its drive for security now cloaked as part of a global campaign for democracy. Thirty months of war in Iraq have left it eager to withdraw troops, not send them into battle. Diplomacy has become the byword of a govern-

ment scrambling to mend fences

and cover itself with multilateral

It's no accident that Karen Hughes, a close Bush confidante now charged with burnishing Washington's image abroad, is seeking to use Sunday's anniversary to also memorialise terrorist attacks elsewhere across the globe. State Department spokesman

Sean McCormack confirmed that Hughes was seeking ideas from US embassies abroad. "What this is meant to show is that we are all in this fight against terrorism together," McCormack said. Hurricane Katrina, which left thousands feared dead and hun-

dreds of thousands homeless in the country's worst natural disaster, has also spotlighted changes here since the September 11 attacks. Whereas the Bush administration acted decisively with al-Qaeda,

it faltered in its response to Katrina.

If 9-11 produced displays of world solidarity, the post-storm relief fiasco prompted expressions of disbelief and even ridicule.

Perhaps more fundamentally

Katrina provided the Republican

White House with the first real test of

its elaborate civil defence program

axed on a massive Department of Homeland Security. By all accounts, it failed miserably. Experts such as James Carafano of the conservative Heritage Foundation looked at the response to Katrina and shuddered at the thought of a nuclear, chemical or biological attack that would leave

dead. "We should learn from this tragedy whether we have the right kinds of resources and programs in place to provide an adequate national response to catastrophic disaster -either natural or manmade, Carafano said.

tens or hundreds of thousands

Homeland Security chief Michael Chertoff, under intense fire for the federal response to the hurricane, acknowledged Sunday the measures adopted after September 11 were yet to be fully implemented. "I'll tell you something I said a

month ago before this (Katrina) happened," Chertoff said. "I said that I thought we need to build a preparedness capacity going forward that we have not yet succeeded in doing," Chertoff said.

# Business frets over

Bangladeshi exporters and the government should consider the "It is a big blow for the garment

on Saturdays," he said. Considering their workload, the

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh