

UN issues travel alert for staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) yesterday issued a circular asking the staffs of 16 UN bodies and six UN-affiliated organisations not to travel outside Dhaka until further notice.

The circular also asked the staffs to remain indoors during today's nationwide shutdown.

Sources in the UN offices in Dhaka told The Daily Star yesterday that the latest circular came hard on the heel of suicide bomb attacks in Chittagong and Gazipur on Tuesday.

The six UN-affiliated bodies where the circular was dispersed are: Asian Development Bank, International Organisation of Migration, Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research Bangladesh (ICDDR), International Jute Study Group and Partners in Population and Development.

As resource persons will be unable to leave for Cox's Bazar because of the latest UNDSS caution, a two-day lawyers' training programme on refugee laws slated for December 2 and 3 under the joint aegis of UNHCR and Bangladesh Bar Council has been put on hold.

Ctg bomber's father, brother held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Sakhipur police yesterday morning arrested the father and brother of Tuesday's bomb attacker on Chittagong court premises from their house at Taktarchala village under Sakhipur upazila in the district.

Abul Bashar alias Hossen Ali conducted the suicide bomb attack on the Chittagong court premises that killed two and injured many others. The badly injured attacker escaped death after the powerful blast and was identified and held.

The two arrestees, father and brother of Hossen Ali, Mofazzal Hossen and Sona Miah, are farmer and rickshaw van driver.

Hossen Ali, 17, a student of class ten of Nalua Based Khan High School of Sakhipur upazila, joined the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) two years ago, police said.

"Hossen Ali left home on Friday saying that he would go to his sister's house at Dhulutia village in Tangail Sadar upazila. Later, we knew that Hossen Ali was not there," Mofazzal Hossen told Sakhipur police.

"Seeing the picture in the newspaper we thought that he might be Hossen Ali," Sona Miah, brother of Hossen Ali told Sakhipur police.

SUICIDE ATTACK Govt urged to take action against Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

South Asian Peoples' Union against Fundamentalism and Communism and Committee to Eliminate the Killers and Collaborators of 1971 at a joint statement yesterday condemned the suicide attack on courts in Gazipur and Chittagong on Tuesday.

Terming the attack an alarming rise of fanatic force under the shadow of Jamaat-e-Islami, the statement said though the newspapers had revealed that the Jamaat and Islami Oikya Jote had link with the 71 fanatic groups, the government is yet to take action against them.

It said even the arrested militants also confessed their association with the Jamaat and recently some Members of the Parliament also divulged information about it. But the government is still indifferent to the issue, which encourages the militant force to continue their evil activities.

The government's urge to resist fanatic groups will bring no result until it severs relation with the Jamaat, the statement said.

It called upon the secular democratic forces to be united with the spirit of the Liberation War and face the fundamentalist forces as they threatened not to observe the National Victory Day this year.

They urged all to take oath to root out the identified communal and fundamentalist forces from the country forever.

The signatories to the statement include Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Women leader Hena Das, Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam, Justice KM Sobhan, Advocate Gazilul Haque, Poet Shamsur Rahman, Prof Azay Roy, Writer Syed Shamsul Haque, Lieutenant Colonel Abu Osman Chowdhury, Language Veteran Abul Hossain, and Dr Zafar Iqbal.

Security vigilance heightened

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry yesterday ordered heightened intelligence vigilance across the country and take stringent security measures in courts and diplomatic zones.

At an emergency meeting with the chiefs of National Security Intelligence, Special Security Force, BDR, police, and Rab, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who is now in charge of the home ministry, ordered the special security measures to counter the suicide bombers and militants.

A combination of administrative action, political will and social move-

ment is needed to face the extremist groups and suicide bombers, Mannan Bhuiyan said at the meeting that discussed the prevailing situation.

He urged the political parties, professional bodies, members of the civil society, and the media to join hands to counter the militant attacks.

Meeting sources hinted that a combing operation is on the card and intelligence members have been deployed throughout the country to locate the militants' hideouts.

The policemen were asked to be on high alert and remain scattered so that they do not become easy

target of the suicide bombers.

The meeting decided to reward the killed policeman in Chittagong and provide good treatment to the injured policemen and civilians admitted into different hospitals.

Bhuiyan also enquired about the condition of the people injured in Chittagong and Gazipur bombings and asked ministers in charge of the two districts to see that they are given good treatment.

Home Secretary Safar Raj Hossain was present at the meeting.

The November 29 suicide bomb attacks on Gazipur and Chittagong courts killed nine and injured about 78 people.

AIDS DAY TODAY

'Asian govts lack political will to fight Aids'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World Aids Day will be observed today in the country as elsewhere in the world with the theme 'Stop Aids: Keep promise'.

Different social and political organisations including Bangladesh Parliament Members Support Group (BPMMSG), Association of Rural Development Bangladesh and Care-Bangladesh arranged various programmes to mark the day.

Only one in seven of the HIV-positive people in Asia has access to treatment, reveals a report of ActionAid Bangladesh.

The report criticises that most Asian governments lack the political will to allocate adequate resources to comprehensively fight Aids.

In the past year 1.1 million people were newly infected with HIV/Aids in Asia but the governments across the continent have still to wake up to the enormity of the impact on their people as well as their economies.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan says in his message prior to Worlds Aids Day, "We have a clear plan of action to halt and reverse the spread of Aids."

Care-Bangladesh organises an elaborate programme that includes bringing out colourful processions in the city and in districts, holding discussions with the civil society, talk show on TV channels and publishing posters and banners.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

DEBATE

DU Rokeya Hall becomes champion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University (DU) became champion in the 'Anti-Corruption Debate Competition' defeating law department of the same university yesterday.

Fahima Tasnim Tania of the winning team was adjudged the best debater of the final.

The motion of the final debate was 'Only social movement can prevent corruption.'

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the debate competition to mark the 'International Anti-corruption Day' on December 9.

Thirty-six teams from different public and private universities took part in the four-day debate competition.

Chairman of development studies department of DU Dr Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman, BELA Director Syeda Rizwana Hasan, and Associate Editor of Dainik Samakal Ajoy Das Gupta were on the judges' panel.

Speaking at the concluding ceremony at Hotel Abakash in the city, Chairman of TIB Trustee Board and Chairman of Square Group Samson H Chowdhury said there will be no development unless transparency is established in every sector in the country.

He blamed the politicians for corruption in the country.

Awards will be presented to the winners at the National Press Club in the city on December 9.

BRAC WORKSHOP

'Govt, NGO's must work together to eradicate poverty'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday stressed the need for coordination of the government, NGO's and the civil society in order to eradicate extreme poverty from the country.

They said the civil society members could play a vital role in raising awareness about the rights of the ultra-poor people.

Brac Advocacy and Human Rights Unit organised the workshop titled 'ultra-poor programme and participation of the civil society' at Brac Centre Inn auditorium in the city.

Programme coordinator of Brac Rabeya Yasmin said different government and non-government organisations are implementing various programmes that are mainly micro credit programme to reduce poverty. But 31 per cent people in the country are ultra poor people who are always out of the micro credit coverage.

To make the ultra poor self-reliant, Brac took a programme titled 'challenging the frontiers of poverty reduction: targeting the ultra poor', she said.

Abdul Muid Chowdhury, executive director of Brac, said apart from creating awareness among the people, cooperation from all walks of life is needed to reduce poverty from the country.

He urged the local government and wealthy people of the society to extend their helping hands for the ultra poor who are leading a miserable life.

M Hafizuddin Khan, former advisor of caretaker government, said poverty can be completely eliminated if the government initiate proper project for the ultra poor and there has to be a strong commitment among the government and the NGO's.

Famous TV personality and lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor said munga, a famine like situation, occurs in the northern districts as most of the people in that part of the country are landless and do not have any work for two months. Moreover there is no income generating industry in that area so that they get an opportunity for work.

Praising Brac's programme he suggested that mere loan is not enough to reduce poverty, there should be a close monitoring system, as the poor people do not know where to use the money.

Afsan Chowdhury, director of Brac AHR Unit, Tajul Islam Chowdhury, a lawmaker of Kurigram and Dr Mezbah Uddin, member of Planning Commission also spoke.

JAMALPUR BLASTS JMB chief, 10 others accused in charge sheet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Jamalpur police pressed charges against 10 Islamist militants, including chief of the banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), for their involvement in seven serial blasts in the Jamalpur town on August 17.

Investigation officer of the blast case Inspector Mohammad Zakir Hossain submitted the charge sheet to a Jamalpur court on Tuesday, accusing JMB Chief Abdur Rahman, his brothers Ataur Rahman (Sunni) and Maulana Obaidur Rahman, and his nephew Nahidur Rahman (Nahid). The other accused are Shibul, Mehidi Habib Rafique, Hassan, Golam Mostafa (Badsha Master), Amir Khan and Abu Noman Mohammad Amanullah.

Abdur Rahman masterminded the blasts and Abu Noman Mohammad Amanullah and eight other JMB cadres carried out it, the charge sheet stated.

Amir Khan, Abu Noman and Obaidur Rahman are in Jamalpur jail but seven others have evaded arrest.

August 17 serial bombings UNB adds: Panchagarh Police yesterday submitted charge-sheet against 11, including Abdul Awal, son-in-law of Islamist outfit JMB chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman, in connection with bomb blasts in the district during the August 17 serial bombings across the country.

The other accused are Hafizur Rahman alias Hafiz alias Noman, Abdul Matin alias Ismail, Tanviruzzaman alias Salman alias Murad, Khalilur Rahman, Azizul Islam alias Maznu, Abdul Momin, Rasidul Islam alias Asad, Hamidul Islam alias Habib, Firoz alias Murad and Fazlur Rahman. Of them, Asad, Habib, Murad and Fazlu are absconding, while the remaining seven are now in jail.

Tanviruzzaman, Noman, Ismail and Maznu gave confessional statements before a magistrate admitting to their involvement in the August 17 bombings.

They also disclosed that Rajshahi divisional commander of JMB Abdul Awal directed them in conducting the bomb explosions.



PHOTO: STAR

Catherine Masud speaks at a press conference on 'Tri-Continental Film Festival' in the city yesterday. On her right is Mirka Kristina Rahman while on her left are Jean Romnicianu, first counsellor of French Embassy, Dr Hameeda Hossain and Khushi Kabir.

Oust Jamaat from govt or BNP will ruin

Tariqat, Zaker Party leaders urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Tariqat Federation (BTF) and Zaker Party yesterday blamed Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh for the Tuesday's bomb blast in Gajipur and Chittagong.

They said the government is patronising Jamaat for carrying out the brutal bombings.

The leaders urged Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to expel Jamaat from the coalition otherwise the BNP will ruin very soon.

Addressing as chief guest at a grand rally at the Paltan Maydan in the city Jaker Party Chairman Mustafa Amir Faysal Mujaddedi said Jamaat is in the back of all bomb blasts in the country.

Faysal said that Jammata is the godfather of the JMB, HuJi and other militant groups who are blasting bombs in the country.

The Wahabist and Moududist Jamaat-Shirif want to stain country's image as a secular country and establish the state as a failed state, said Faysal

He also said that the Jamaat wants to go to power by killing people.

Islam does not allow murder of people and there is no contradiction between secularism and Islam, added Faysal.

"We do not consider Jamaat an Islamic party, because there is no similarity between the laws and rules of Islam and Jamaat."

He urged Jammata to delete the word 'Islam' from their party name.

BTF President Syed Nazibul Basar Maizvandari strongly demanded to expel Jammata from the coalition government within February 28 of the next year.

He also demanded to find out the godfathers and the criminals who blasted the bombs and punish them within the deadline.

Four killed in road accident

DMCH CORRESPONDENT

Four people, including a woman and a boy, were killed in separate road accidents in the city yesterday.

Nasima Akhter, 20, a garment worker, died on the spot as a passenger bus of Manjil Paribahan ran over her at Uttara in the city at around 7:30am when she was going to her workplace.

Uttara police seized the bus, but the driver and helper managed to escape.

Another accident took place at Gulistan at around 12:00 noon. A speeding bus of Panjeri Paribahan ran over an unidentified boy, aged around 12, leaving him critically injured. He had a packet of biscuit in his hand when the bus knocked him down. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead.

At Mirpur, a speeding vehicle ran over Muhammad Salim, 22, on Darussalam Road at around 1:30pm. Passers-by rushed him to the DMCH, but the doctors pronounced him dead.

Another man, aged around 28, died on the spot at Begum Rokeya Sarani when a heavy vehicle knocked him down at around 8:00am.

Nizami now sees foreign hands in bombings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh chief Motiur Rahman Nizami yesterday said the suicide bombers are working to create an opportunity for foreign intervention in the country by destroying political stability through anarchy.

"It is evident now that the suicide bombers want to portray Bangladesh as a terrorism-stricken and dysfunctional state and aim at crafting the opportunity for intervention by foreign powers through destroying political stability," he said.

Nizami, also the minister for industries, made this comment at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday, a day after nine people including two lawyers and a policeman were killed in two suicide bomb attacks in Chittagong and Gazipur.

The Jamaat ameer did not mention the name of any foreign powers despite insistence from the press.

He just said: "It is not difficult to understand the impression of those who consider that Bangladesh's situation is worse than Iraq and Afghanistan. We all know what happened in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Nizami alleged that the secretary for diplomatic affairs of a big political party (referring to Awami League), from a seminar in Dhaka after the August 17 blasts, had officially expressed the desire for outside intervention in the country."

"Those who are carrying out bombings have no relation with Islam...I don't think they have any other ill motive than creating a havoc and make opportunity for another party," said the industries minister.

Asked about this 'another party', he said: "This party arranged the seminar in the capital and sought foreign intervention."

On whether Jamaat's previous denial of Bangla Bhai's existence has resulted in the rise of Islamist militants, he said: "We never supported taking law in own hands, whoever he is....You cannot say that we earlier denied it and are now admitting it."

Asked to elaborate his statement published in a national daily two days ago that the government might have used Bangla Bhai, Nizami said

Tri-Continental Film Festival begins Dec 8

BDNEWS, Dhaka

A weeklong Tri-Continental Film Festival will begin in Dhaka on December 8.

International award-winning feature films from Africa, Latin America and Asia will be screened in the festival organised by the French embassy, said a press release.

Most of these films, among 12, will come from predominantly Muslim countries such as Tajikistan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, Palestine and Pakistan.

Apart from the host country, Cambodia, Argentina, China and South Africa will also take part in the festival.

First Counsellor of French Embassy Jean Romnicianu disclosed this at a press conference at National Press Club yesterday.

Four films will be screened at Star Cineplex every day from December 8 to 13. Each of the 12 films will be shown twice over the six-day period.

A festival advisory committee has been formed with leading women personalities from different sections of society.

Chaired by eminent human rights activist Dr Hameeda Hossain, the committee members include Nasrine R Karim, Geeteara S Chowdhury, Khushi Kabir, Tasmina Hossain, Dr Naila Khan, Shaheen Anam, Sara Zaker, Shameem Akhtar, Rifaat Rachid, Munira Morshed Munni and Catherine Masud.

Mirka Kristina Rahman, managing director of Star Cineplex, and Gaelle Le-Goff, cultural attaché of the French Embassy, are also on the committee.

Obituary



Rokeya Sultana Chowdhury (Meera), wife of Syed Golam Muktader, passed away due to respiratory complications at Apollo Hospital in Dhaka on Tuesday at the age of 60, says a press release.

She left behind her husband, only daughter Mona and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at Azad Central Mosque in Gulshan after Juma prayers tomorrow.

Her qulkhani will be held the same day after Maghrib prayers at her residence at 'Trellis Court', House #3/B, Road #58, Gulshan-2.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the namaz-e-janaza and the qulkhani and pray for the departed soul.

DHAKA

T O D A Y

Seminar

Islamic Relief Bangladesh organises a seminar on 'Building Partnership between Muslim NGOs and the International Community'. Venue: Sonargaon. Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum organises a discussion with Barrister Nazmul Huda in the chair. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 6:00pm.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of 'Selina Bahar Zaman Smarakgrantha' will be held. Venue: Institute of Diploma Engineers, Kakrail. Time: 6:30pm.

Discussion

Vivekananda Shikha O Sangskriti Parishad organises a discussion to mark the founding anniversary of the organisation. Venue: Jagannath Hall Upashanaley, DU. Time: 5:30pm.