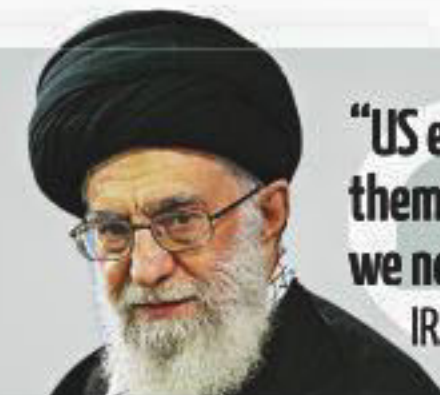




"Our intention, no matter what happens, is to have a good relationship with Bangladesh."
PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY OF THE UK FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE SIR SIMON McDONALD, REGARDING BREXIT



"The rape of women has turned epidemic. The deterioration in law and order is evident here."
JATIYA OIKYAFRONT CONVENER DR KAMAL HOSSAIN (PAGE 4)



"US efforts to boycott the sale of Iran's oil won't get them anywhere. We will export our oil as much as we need and we intend."
IRAN'S SUPREME LEADER AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI

Stay alert

PM to people in the aftermath of Sri Lanka blasts



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in parliament yesterday asked people to be alert and inform law enforcement agencies about any suspected terror and militant activities without delay.

Her call comes days after blasts swept through posh hotels and churches in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, leaving 359 dead and around 500 injured.

"I have no words to condemn such terror and militant attacks," she said before the question-answer session in the House.

"I would like to urge the people of the country to remain alert and inform the law enforcement agencies promptly if there is any abnormal activity."

Hasina said Islam is a religion of peace but some people humiliate the religion before the world by carrying out militant activities in its name.

The prime minister said some 40 children, including Zayan Chowdhury, a grandson of Awami League presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, were killed in the terror attacks.

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Mostly due to favourable weather, farmers in Moulvibazar's Hakaluki haor are blessed with fields of bumper crop of paddy. Harvesting and threshing, inset, are going on in full swing in the area. The photos were taken on Monday.

PHOTO:
MINTU DESHWARA

BORO HARVEST SMILES in HAOR

MINTU DESHWARA

In 2017, the shock was overwhelming for Chan Mia -- he lost all the Boro paddy grown on seven acres of land to flash floods. The next year, the paddy he cultivated on three acres was damaged. This time it was pest attack.

After the two shocks in a row, fortune smiled on him. He expects to bring home all his produce this year, thanks to favourable weather conditions and almost a total absence of pest attack.

"I'm happy," said Chan Mia while harvesting his crop. "I hope to finish the cropping by the end of this month."

Chan Mia is from Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar in the haor region where paddy is the main crop. Harvesting started in mid-April and will continue till the end of the month. Chan Mia expects that this year's output would be around 25 tonnes from his seven acres.

This year the overall Boro production has exceeded in Sylhet division, said officials

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RELATED STORY ON B1

Sri Lanka admits major intel lapses

18 more suspects arrested as death toll rises to 359; president asks police chief, defence secretary to quit

AGENCIES

Sri Lanka's government yesterday acknowledged "major" lapses over its failure to prevent the horrific Easter attacks that killed more than 350 people, despite prior intelligence warnings.

Recriminations have flown since Islamist suicide bombers blew themselves up in packed churches and luxury hotels on Sunday, in attacks claimed by the Islamic State group.

Overnight, security forces using newly granted powers under the country's state of emergency arrested 18 more suspects in connection with the attack, as the toll rose to 359.

Police have so far arrested 58 people, all Sri Lankans, and security remains heavy, with bomb squads carrying out several controlled explosions of suspect packages yesterday.

But the government faces anger over revelations that specific warnings about an attack went ignored.

Sri Lanka's police chief issued a warning on April 11 that suicide bombings against "prominent churches" by local Islamist group, National Thowheeth Jama'ath were possible and alerts had been given by a foreign intelligence agency.

CNN reported that Indian intelligence services had passed on "unusually specific" information in the weeks before the attacks, some of it from an IS suspect in their custody.

But that information was not shared with the prime minister or other top ministers, the government says.

"It was a major lapse in the sharing of information," deputy defence

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bomber studied in UK, Australia

Says junior defence minister of Sri Lanka

AGENCIES

Sri Lankan authorities have confirmed one of the suicide bombers responsible for the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks studied in UK and Australia.

Sri Lankan Junior Minister for Defence Ruwan Wijewardene said the bomber completed his post-graduate education in Australia.

"Most of the bombers are well-educated, come from economically strong families. Some of them went abroad for studies," Wijewardene said.

"We believe that one of the suicide bombers studied in the UK and then later on did his postgraduate in Australia before coming back to settle in Sri Lanka. Foreign partners, including the UK, are helping us with those investigations," he said.

UK authorities have been given his name and are investigating who he met prior to the attacks, says the BBC's Security Correspondent Frank Gardner.

Wijewardene said authorities were still investigating the possibility of international links and residents were urged to be vigilant.

"I'm not saying that the country is 100 percent [safe] at the moment ... there could be still a few people out there," he

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BEGGARS' REHABILITATION

Govt failure writ large

Children not even considered

BISHAKHA DEVNATH

Feroz, 13, leaves Habib from time to time in his makeshift wheelchair outside the High Court Mazar gate and disappears into the distance. The young boy was hired seven days ago to wheel around Habib -- who earns his living by begging.

In return for the service, Habib has promised Feroz free food and enough money in a year to build a hut for his family.

Feroz speaks only once but his words highlight how he feels about the arrangement.

"I am here for one year.... Not even a day more," he says.

Habib, who hails from Patuakhali, was born with a congenital disability in the legs and hands. He resorted to begging after finding nothing else to do. Over the years, he has hired many like Feroz to accompany him.

The deal between Habib and the child's family seems to be benefiting both the sides, save the fact that it is depriving Feroz of all the rights a child is entitled to. The 55-year-old Habib too has no choice.

While the country has been experiencing a remarkable economic shift over the last decade -- with the economy growing at



A homeless boy, who used to live on alms, is all smiles after he is rescued by an NGO.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

a record-high pace of 8.13 percent in the fiscal year to July 2019 -- prosperity has yet to reach people like Feroz and Habib.

Although there are laws in place for people in need, those are only on paper.

The Hawker and the Disadvantaged (Rehabilitation) Act 2011 provides for detention of vagrants at government or private shelter homes for a maximum of two years and creating employment or source of income through skill development before release. A detainee can also be handed over to his relatives or any socially well-known person willing to take the responsibility.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

No electricity at home, yet a defaulter!

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Jalal Uddin Mondol, a Mymensingh resident, spent three days in jail for defaulting on an electricity bill despite not having power connection in his entire village.

Police arrested Mondol, 50, from his house in Bhaluka upazila's Birunia village on April 13 following a case filed by Palli Bidyut Samity-2 against one Md Jamal Uddin for not paying his electricity bill amounting to Tk 5,051.

Md Sekandar Ali, assistant general manager (administration) of Palli Bidyut Samity-2, filed the case against Jamal last year.

Jamal -- a Malaysian expatriate -- used to live in Kaichan village which is next to Mondol's village.

After his arrest, Jamal was produced before a court which sentenced him to jail.

He was released after

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Family members place flowers on the grave of Rexy Douglas, 67, yesterday, three days after a string of suicide bomb attacks on churches and luxury hotels killed 359 people in Sri Lanka. The photo was taken at a cemetery near St Sebastian's Church in Negombo.

PHOTO:
REUTERS

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