

Al Qaeda mastermind was 'planning more attacks'

AFP, Islamabad

Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the suspected mastermind of the September 11 terrorist attacks, was expected to be interrogated in US custody Monday amid reports that he was planning further strikes.

Officials said that Mohammed remained in Pakistan after his capture over the weekend in a raid in the northern city of Rawalpindi, but Information Minister Sheikh Rashid indicated that he could soon be transferred.

"Up until last (Sunday) night he was with us in Pakistan," Rashid told AFP.

"He was being interrogated by the joint Pakistani and US investigation team somewhere in the

Islamabad-Rawalpindi region," he said referring to the capital and the nearby crowded garrison city where Mohammed was captured before dawn on Saturday.

Rashid said Mohammed "could be" flown out of Pakistan Monday.

"He is here in Pakistan in US custody," a security official told AFP, asking not to be named.

"He is such a mastermind, if we felt that he is wanted by a country where he committed some crime, we should not take a big risk" of keeping him in Pakistan, he said.

The arrest of Mohammed, considered number three in the al-Qaeda network after Osama bin Laden and his Egyptian deputy

Ayman al-Zawahri, is one of the biggest coups of the 18-month war on terrorism.

Security officials said he was handed over to US custody late Saturday or early Sunday, and one senior military official said there had been a plan to fly him to the US military base at Bagram in Afghanistan early Sunday.

However he was unable to confirm whether the plan went ahead.

Mohammed is believed to be al-Qaeda's operational director and the architect of the September 2001 attacks when four hijacked planes ploughed into New York's World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania, killing more than 3,000 people.

Mohammed is an uncle of Ramzi Yousef -- convicted over the 1993 bomb attack on New York's World Trade Center -- and he is also believed to have been planning fresh terror strikes.

According to Newsweek magazine, Mohammed was planning more attacks on US soil.

A February 26 intelligence report obtained by the latest edition of the news weekly said Mohammed "is actively involved in al-Qaeda attack planning in Conus (continental US)," according to the magazine's March 10 issue.

"He has directed operatives to target bridges, gas stations, and power plants in a number of loca

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PHOTO: KAMRUL AHSAN

The International Trade Fair at the Circuit House Maidan in Khulna was closed on a deputy commissioner's order after a string of bomb blasts killed a traffic sergeant and injured ten others at the fair venue Saturday.

HC asks govt to explain tannery units relocation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court Division of the Supreme Court yesterday asked the government to explain why it should not be directed to relocate the tannery industries from the Hazaribagh area to a suitable place within 18 months.

Issuing a *rule nisi*, the court also directed seven government agencies and two tannery associations to submit a report in this regard within six months. They are also to notify the court about a reply within four weeks.

The High Court also directed the government to ensure that

adequate anti-pollution devices are developed in the new location as required under the Environment Conservation Act, 1995 and the Factories Act, 1965.

Few months ago, the government took up a project to relocate the tannery industries from Hazaribagh to Savar and set up a 'leather city' there by 2005.

The prime minister has also promised at several public meetings to relocate the industries. But so far there has been no progress.

The relocation has been contemplated in the Master Plan prepared under the Town Improvement Act 1953.

The directions of the court followed a writ filed by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA).

The tannery industries release nearly 22,000 cubic metres of untreated toxic wastes everyday to the Buriganga River.

The tannery industries discharge. The Department of Environment (DoE) in a survey in 1997 found that oxygen level in the river was zero. As a result, marine life in the river has depleted.

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AL for army in Barisal, Sylhet city polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded deployment of troops in the Barisal and Sylhet city corporation election on March 20.

The AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad and Advocate Rahmat Ali made the demand at a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed at the Election Commission, said sources.

The government has violated the constitution by not complying with the EC's demand for troops deployment in the Union Parishad polls, the leaders told the CEC.

They also urged MA Syed to ensure a peaceful atmosphere during the city corporation polls.

PBCP men kill two in Meherpur

Student killed in police fire in Patuakhali polls violence

STAR REPORT

A newly elected Union Parishad chairman and a trader were shot dead in Meherpur and a college student was killed in police firing in Patuakhali Sunday night.

Bazlur Rahman, 45, chairman of the Shahbati Union Parishad, Meherpur, and Amirul Islam Bokul, 42, owner of an electronics shop, came under attacks by three masked men at Gangni Bazaar at about 8.00pm, said witnesses. Bazlur was also a local Awami League leader.

Police blamed the killing on the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), said our Kushtia correspondent.

Bokul died instantly and Bazlur after admission to the Kushtia General Hospital at about 9.45pm

Sunday.

Police arrested 24 people in Meherpur, Jhenidah and Chuadanga in connection with the killing.

Bokul was once involved with the PBCP and the killing may be the result of his rivalry with other cadres, say sources.

Inspector General of Police

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Anti-war rally tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The local civil society will organise a grand rally and demonstration in Dhaka tomorrow against the possible US-led attack on Iraq.

Organisers urged people to join the anti-war rally starting at 3.00pm at the Central Shaheed Minar.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Mar 4		6-02 pm
Mar 5	6-17 am	

Prayer Timings		
Mar 4		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	6-07	6-12
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation