

Police detain Mumbai blast suspects

REUTERS, Mumbai

India pointed the finger at Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba yesterday as the prime suspect for coordinated bombings in the country's largest city, as police said they had detained about 20 people.

Investigators have also prepared sketches of three suspects seen at the sites of the bomb attacks, which killed 186 people and wounded more than 700.

"So far it looks like there was a substantial involvement of Lashkar-e-Taiba with local support," D.K. Shankaran, the most senior bureaucrat in Maharashtra government, told Reuters.

Lashkar, or LeT, has long operated in Indian-ruled Kashmir, but is

believed to have expanded its area of operations recently.

It was blamed for bomb attacks on markets in New Delhi in October that killed more than 60 people, as well as bombs in the holy Hindu city of Varanasi in March that killed 15 people.

Lashkar was also held partly responsible for a 2001 attack on the parliament in New Delhi that brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war.

"We cannot put the blame on any particular group right now, but we have some indication because this attack looks similar to LeT's earlier attacks," said K.P. Raghuvanshi, anti-terrorism squad chief.

Television reports said many people had been picked up from

hotels and guest houses in the city. Authorities in Maharashtra formed a special team of officers on Thursday to investigate the bombings.

"We have questioned 250 to 300 people as part of the investigations in two days," said A.N. Roy, Mumbai's police chief. "Around 20 people have been detained at various places."

Indian TV channels also linked the attacks to the Students' Islamic Movement of India, banned in 2001 for allegedly trying to stir religious unrest over the US-led war on terror and which is thought to have links with Lashkar.

Lashkar has denied any role in what it called "inhuman and barbaric acts".

Dr Kamal hopeful of forming grand alliance against 4-party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the process of grand national consensus among Awami League (AL)-led 14-party coalition, Gono Forum, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) and Bangladesh Tarikat Federation is underway as they will work together to defeat the BNP-Jamaat alliance in the next general elections.

"It is a good news for the nation that all progressive and pro-liberation forces are being united on the basis of the 14-party's 23-point proposal. Now we are working to form a grand national consensus for safeguarding the democracy, people and nation from the grip of BNP-Jamaat-led four-party alliance government," the Gono Forum President said at a



A minister's SUV (red and silver) narrowly escapes a head-on collision with another vehicle as it takes an illegal turn in front of the chief justice's residence at Kakrail in the capital yesterday.

Prepare list of ruling party men who 'plundered' funds: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to prepare lists of the ministers, MPs and local leaders of the alliance government who "plundered" public money.

"The BNP-led coalition government wants to stay in power through election engineering to enjoy the illegal money... People will have to foil the evil design of the government," she said.

Hasina, also the president of Awami League (AL), made the remarks while exchanging views with the party's grassroots level leaders of Rangpur and Pabna districts at AL's Dhanmondi office.

She alleged that the government had earned Tk 2.86 lakh crore during the last four and a half years by increasing the prices of essentials.



Dhaka City Corporation takes no notice as wastes dumped in Dhanmondi Lake are polluting water.

Demand for rejecting Tata proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Ports yesterday demanded Tata's three billion dollar investment proposal be rejected outright in the greater interest of the country.

The committee leaders said it is a tactic of Tata Group to put pressure on the government by suspending their investment proposal activities. The leaders at a press conference held at the National Press Club said the government would have to give subsidy worth \$ 21 billion to supply gas to Tata.

The committee called Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman a liar since he said Tata had proposed

Diplomatic efforts fail to defuse Korean nuke crisis

AFP, Beijing

Diplomatic efforts to defuse the North Korean missile crisis collapsed yesterday, as a Chinese mission to Pyongyang failed to produce a breakthrough and talks between the two Koreas ended in acrimony.

The failure set the stage for a showdown at the United Nations, where the United States and Japan are pushing for tough action against the secretive state after it launched seven missiles in Japan's direction last week.

The top US negotiator on North Korea, Christopher Hill, said during a visit to Beijing that the regime could now expect a "very strong" message after China's efforts to

lower tensions in the region failed.

"I have talked as much as I can with the Chinese to see what's going on with their mission in Pyongyang. From what I understand, we don't have any breakthroughs in Pyongyang," Hill said before departing for Washington.

"So far (the North Koreans) don't seem interested in listening, much less in doing anything to address the situation," said the American diplomat, who has been shuttling among Asian capitals since the tests rattled the region.

The United Nations had put off action at the Security Council on North Korea pending the outcome of the Chinese mission to Pyongyang.

Japan and the United States

have been promoting a tough Security Council resolution calling for missile-related sanctions against North Korea, but have fielded an alternative draft that would not make sanctions mandatory.

"I'm confident there will be a very strong, very clear message for the DPRK (North Korea)," Hill said.

"Nobody is supporting the North Korean (position) ... that they have a right to do this ... that it's their legal right."

China is considered the country with potentially the most leverage on the isolated North Korean communist regime due to its shared political ideologies and considerable food and fuel aid.

Saarc Fund to be launched early next year

UNB, Dhaka

The Saarc Development Fund (SDF) is expected to be launched early next year with an initial amount of \$ 300 million as Saarc finance ministers decided at their meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan, on Tuesday.

"The fund is to help reduce poverty in the region," State Minister for Finance and Planning Shah Mohammed Abul Hussain told reporters at Zia International Airport on his return from the meeting.

He represented Bangladesh at the meeting while the finance ministers from other member countries participated. Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz inaugurated the meeting.

2 ship-breaking workers die of toxic gas

CU CORRESPONDENT

Two workers died due to inhalation of poisonous gas trapped inside a scrap vessel at a ship-breaking yard at Shitalpur under Sitakunda Police Station on Wednesday night.

The dead were identified as Md Jahangir, 45, a cutter foreman hailing from nearby Abdullah Ghata of Salimpur under Sitakunda, and Abul Kalam, 35, a cutting worker of Mahendra Nagar under Harati in Lalmonirhat district.

According to sources, the accident occurred when both the workers at the Royal Steel Ship Breaking Yard went to examine an oil tanker at around 7:00pm before dismantling it.

Kalam fell sick as soon as he entered into the tank while Jahangir also fell victim to poisonous gas

EC to provide 108m euro for health, population sector

UNB, Dhaka

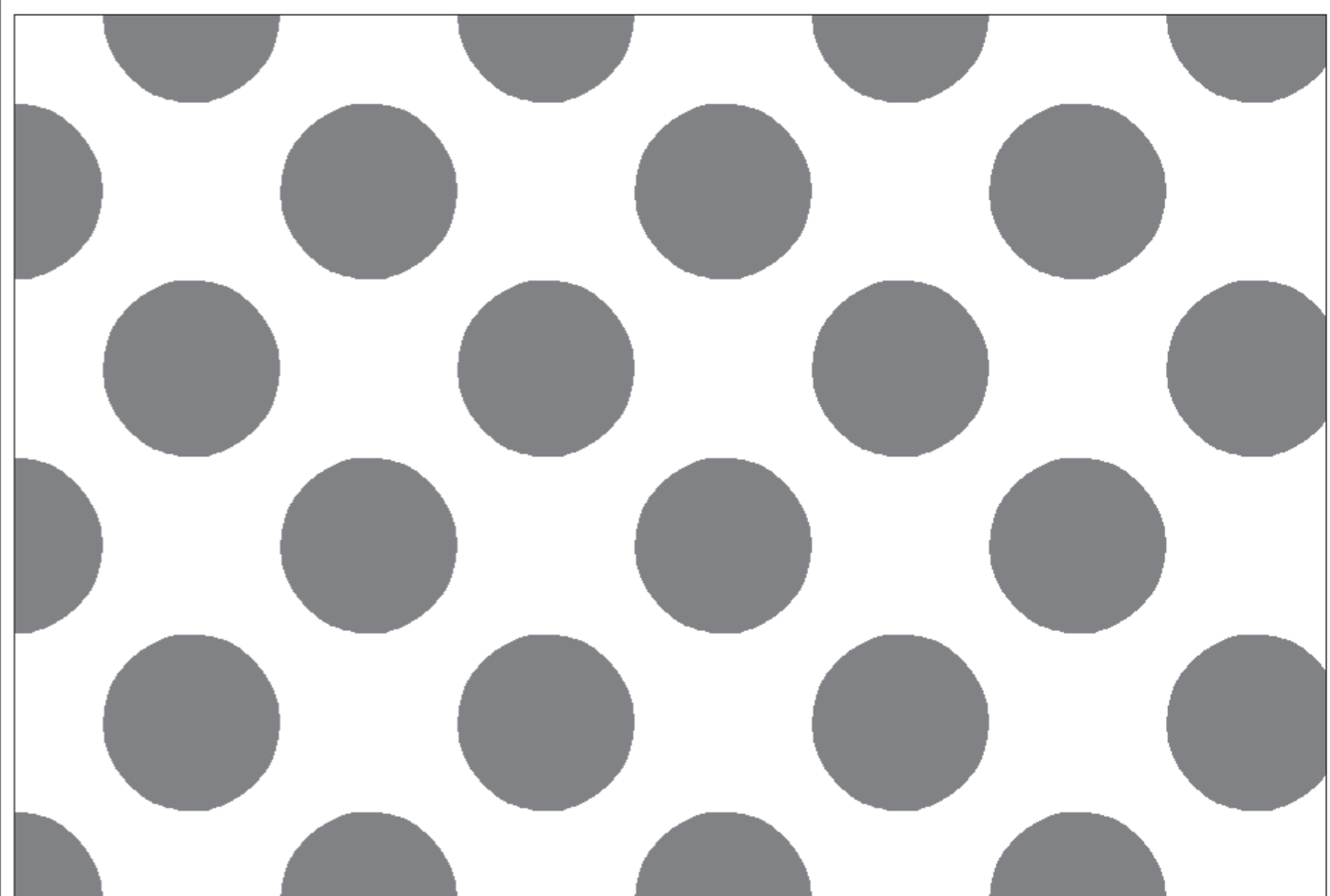
The European Commission (EC) will provide 108 million euro, equivalent to Tk 950 crore, for funding Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPS) in Bangladesh.

To this effect, Charge d' Affaires of the European Commission (EC) in Dhaka Françoise Collet and Economic Relations Division Secretary M Ismail Zabihullah yesterday exchanged the signed agreements on behalf of their respective sides.

An EC release said the commis-

sion will support the HNPS programme by contributing 76million euro to a World Bank-administered pool fund and 10-million euro to Urban Primary Health Care Programme where donor contributions are administered by Asian Development Bank.

It will also support the programme by contributing 10 million euro to specifically targeted projects for improving maternal and child health services and 9 million euro for strengthening health services in areas with minority populations.



3 Bangladeshis shot dead by BSF

STAR REPORT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down three Bangladeshis in bordering areas of Jessore and Chuadanga Wednesday night and yesterday.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources said the BSF members shot dead Ikramul Haq Ika, 32, on Wednesday night while he was reportedly jumping over barbed wire fences, trying to get across the border at Raghunathpur in Benapole.

In Putkhali village, Goutam Pagla was hit by bullets and died on the spot at around 11:00am yesterday when BSF men opened fire on five cattle traders crossing Isamoti river with Indian cattle.

Hearing the gunshots, as BDR personnel moved towards the scene, BSF members fired on their

UP chairman, another killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two alleged criminals including a Union Parishad (UP) chairman were killed yesterday in two separate 'crossfire' incidents with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and their accomplices in Demra in the capital and Raniganar upazila in Naogaon.

The dead are Mohammad Jasim also known as Kana Jasim, 34, an accused in at least five cases including murder cases, and Shahidul Islam, 38, a UP chairman of Kaligram of Raniganar upazila.

Acting on a tip off, Rab-10 on Wednesday night raided a Chinese restaurant under Ramna Police Station and arrested Jasim, who was once an accomplice of one of

the top-23 criminals, Pichhi Hannan.

Following his confessional statement, another Rab-10 team carried out a drive at staff-quarters area in Demra along with the arrestee to capture his accomplices and recover hidden firearms.

As the team reached the area, a Rab press release claimed, the accomplices of Jasim opened fire on them against which they retaliated.

During the shootout Jasim tried to escape but fell in the line of fire and received several bullets. Later he was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Bangladeshi, 25 other migrant workers held in Malaysia

AFP, Putrajaya

Malaysian authorities have arrested 26 migrant workers including a Bangladeshi believed to be the leader of a syndicate providing illegal workers, an official said yesterday.

Immigration Department enforcement director Ishak Mohamed said the 28-year-old

Prayer Timing		
July 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation