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PHOTO: STAR
Season of showers...a vendor hawks *kadam*, a flower variety heralding the monsoon that comes on the wings of the Bangla month of Ashar beginning today.

Truck bomb kills 11 near Karachi consulate US shuts diplomatic missions in Pakistan



PHOTO: AFP
US officials and staff inspect the damaged wall of the consulate in Karachi soon after a bomb blast killed 11 people yesterday. US shuttered its diplomatic missions in Pakistan and the American Center in Islamabad following the attack.

AFP, Washington/Karachi

The United States yesterday shuttered its diplomatic missions in Pakistan as well as the American Center in Islamabad after a deadly truck bomb attack outside its consulate in Karachi, the US State Department said.

The embassy and American Center were closed to the public immediately after the blast, as were the consulates in Lahore and Peshawar, Lynn Cassel, a department spokeswoman, told the news agency.

"In addition, we believe that two or more contract consulate guards were critically injured," Cassel said, calling the explosion the result of an "enormous truck bomb" that went off just 15 metres from the southeast corner of the consulate.

"It appears to be a suicide bombing, but we have received no claim of responsibility," she said, adding that a formal State Department statement on the incident would be released shortly.

The attack came a day after US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld visited Pakistan on a mission to ease tensions with India, and a month after another Karachi car bombing.

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PHOTO: AFP
Korea's Park Ji Sung (L) shoots past Portuguese keeper Vitor Baia to score the 71st minute winner at the Incheon Munhak Stadium yesterday.

Portugal's ROK funeral

AFP, Incheon

South Korea joined fellow World Cup co-hosts Japan in the second round of the World Cup yesterday, a Park Ji-Sung goal eliminating nine-man Portugal 1-0 in their final Group D match.

Scenes of near delirium from their ecstatic fans accompanied the South Korean success as they booked an unenviable second-round meeting with three-time champions Italy on Tuesday.

The decisive goal came when

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Grameen Match Report

JCD leader beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A leader of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was beaten to death and another injured in the same attack in the city's Postogola area in the early hours of yesterday.

A gang of 12 attacked Arif Hossain, 25, organising secretary of the ward No. 83 unit of the JCD, in front of the Dhaka Cotton Mills School, at midnight when he along with JCD President of the same unit Golam Kibria Rubel was returning home by rickshaw, said police.

The local people rushed Arif and Rubel to the Dhaka Medical College

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DB men allegedly beat Titon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khandaker Naim Ahmed alias Titon, one of the 23 'most wanted' criminals arrested Wednesday was allegedly beaten up by detectives during interrogation and taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) last night, sources said.

Heavily bandaged around the head, Titon was taken to ward 30 of the Neuro Surgery Department at the DMCH by a team of detectives at about 8:50pm. However, he was taken away from there at about 9:10pm.

The detectives kept tight-lipped about the victim's identity or the nature of his injury, and refused to talk with newsmen gathered at the hospital last night.

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Gold smugglers get away 'Lack of evidence' blamed

SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM

Gold hauls at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) have hogged the headlines time and again, with pictures of alleged gold smugglers and their arresting officers on front pages, but there is hardly any instance of smugglers actually getting punished.

Records show the Customs Department seized Tk 23 crore worth of gold in the last three years and arrested over a dozen gold smugglers. But almost all these smugglers got away due to a 'lack of evidence'. Few others languishing in jails have not been tried yet, but a lack of evidence indicates they may also be released.

The authorities allegedly did not investigate many of the smuggling incidents including those clearly indicating involvement of Biman's technical crew, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) or customs officials. Also, there is a noticeable absence of any drive against the involvement of higher government officials.

Sources say a section of unscrupulous officials of

four departments -- the police, CAAB, Biman and customs cadres -- fabricate the cases of smuggling in such a way that there is insufficient evidence to convict the accused. These officials are part of a racket involved in gold smuggling -- a crime that largely goes unchallenged in the country.

Typically, gold smugglers are arrested on hard evidence. But these evidences are tampered in such ways that smugglers can slip through loopholes and escape punishment while resuming their illegal businesses.

Sources said the officials and employees of the four departments have maintained a smuggling channel for decades protecting their interests. As a result, culprits get away and gold smuggling cases remain unresolved.

Several employees of CAAB, responsible for airport security, are involved in the illegal exchange of foreign currencies and gold smuggling. Some of them had been arrested on different occasions but were later released with the help the CAAB union.

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Japan jet into history

AFP, Osaka

Hosts Japan reached the second round of the World Cup for the first time in their history here yesterday after cruising to a 2-0 victory over Group H rivals Tunisia.

Second half goals from Hiroaki Morishima and Japanese football's Italy-based golden boy Hidetoshi Nakata handed French coach Philippe Troussier's side a deserved win to set up a last-16 clash with Turkey next Tuesday.

Japan, who qualified as Group H winners, had started the World Cup desperate to avoid the ignominy of

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MAnwarul Haq

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Book review: The other side of Sachin Tendulkar; and Book extract: Eclipse of heroes

DHL Spec Report

Forex worth Tk 64 lakh seized at ZIA: 4 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) seized foreign currencies equivalent to Tk 64 lakh from four outgoing passengers in two separate incidents yesterday and Thursday night.

In the latest incident, on-duty customs inspector Wajed Ali challenged Mohammad Asif Mahmud, 32, of Patgaon, Tangibari of Munshiganj district at the boarding bridge as Asif was on his way to board a Dubai-bound Emirates flight EK 583 yesterday morning.

Customs officials recovered 2.13 lakh Saudi rials equivalent to Tk 34 lakh from inside Asif's money-bag, shoes and stockings.

Asif was later handed over to Airport Police.

Earlier on Thursday night, the same inspector challenged three Dubai-bound passengers of Bangladesh Biman flight BG 007 -- Ilyas Ahmed, Afsar Ahmed and Bellal Ahmed at the boarding bridge and subsequently euros equivalent

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