

Pakistan hands key planner of Sept 11 attack to US



Khalid Sheikh Mohammed

REUTERS, Islamabad

After a decade on the run, the suspected mastermind of the September 11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, was in US custody yesterday in what US officials hailed as the biggest catch so far in the global war on terror.

Arrested by plainclothes Pakistani security agents who raided a house in the central city of Rawalpindi in a pre-dawn raid on Saturday, Mohammed was branded by Washington as one of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden's "most senior and significant lieutenants."

Mohammed, whose arrest is a coup for the United States in its hunt for bin Laden and its global

war on terror, was handed over to US custody and taken to an undisclosed location within hours of his arrest, a senior government source said on Sunday.

"He was handed over soon after the arrest," the source said.

It was not known whether the man described by counterterrorism experts as having been behind almost every major terror attack in the last decade had been taken to Afghanistan, a military base in Cuba where other suspected al-Qaeda are held, a US ship or flown to the United States or a third country.

The White House said Mohammed, one of three al-Qaeda suspects detained in the early morning swoop, was "a key al-

Qaeda planner and the mastermind of the September 11 attacks." Officials said the others were a Pakistani and a foreign national of Arab origin.

Analysts describe Mohammed, a Kuwaiti in his late 30s, as a pivotal figure in al-Qaeda who vetted all its recruits and who may know the whereabouts of both bin Laden and Mullah Mohammed Omar, fugitive leader of Afghanistan's former Taliban government.

"It was the work of Pakistani intelligence agencies... It is a big achievement. He is the kingpin of al-Qaeda," said Rashid Qureshi, spokesman for Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, insisting that Pakistani security had operated

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Termination of political recruits at universities demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association (FBUTA) yesterday demanded termination of politically motivated appointments at universities.

The FBUTA leaders blamed the authorities for their 'discriminatory attitude' towards appointments and promotion of university teachers and officials.

They also called for appointment of competent candidates in line with recruitment guidelines.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



PHOTO: AFP

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca, right, speaks with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Magistrate dies in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A magistrate was killed and another injured in a road accident on the Chittagong-Dhaka Highway at Sitakunda upazila yesterday.

Md. Mozammel Haq, 35, land acquisition officer (LAO), was returning to the city along with his colleague AKM Nurul Amin Sarker in a microbus on completion of duty at the Union Parishad election at Mirersarai upazila held Saturday.

Sources said the accident occurred at around 12:30am near Kasher Jute Mills at Sitakunda. The driver of the microbus lost control and it ramed into an immobile truck. Mozammel died on the spot while magistrate Nurul Amin was admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

The namaj-e-janaza of Mozammel was held at the Circuit House premises in the morning. Later his body was sent to his home at Singaboruna under Sreebari upazila of Sherpur district.

Ershad plans JS comeback

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad is planning to return to the parliament as an MP.

He has asked his brother GM Kader MP to get ready to resign from his Rangpur-3 constituency. Ershad intends to win from this constituency through a by-election.

However, it is still not clear whether he is legally qualified to participate in the election. According to the Constitution, a person jailed for at least two years for moral turpitude would not be considered qualified to participate in the election until he serves his term and five additional years.

"That is why we are analysing the legal aspects (the Janata Tower case verdict)," Ershad told The Daily Star. "If we find that I am now eligible, then I will participate in the by-election."

RAT nabs 'criminal'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Team (RAT) has nabbed listed criminal Sajedul Islam alias Kala Sumon and two of his associates from Tejgaon area yesterday.

The RAT members raided different points of Shahinbag under Tejgaon area at around noon to get hold of Kala Sumon. Sumon has been escaping arrest in a number of criminal cases including assault on police.

His associates, Abdullah Al Mamun and Morshed, have also been involved in criminal activities for a long time, police said.

The team also arrested Sajib Khan alias Shiplu, the accused in several cases including arms, murder and robbery. Shiplu was picked up from Dhanmondi and Harun-ur-Rashid alias Mukul, associate of listed criminal Taj, was nabbed from Kafur area yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Candidates for the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations gather in front of the Public Service Commission at Tejgaon in Dhaka yesterday, protesting the alleged leakage of the 24th BCS preliminary test questions.

Iraq attack immediately after UNSC vote

Sunday Telegraph reports

AFP, London

The US and Britain are prepared to launch war against Iraq immediately after the United Nations Security Council votes on a second resolution, regardless of its outcome, the Sunday Telegraph reported.

Senior ministers told the British weekly that Prime Minister Tony Blair was prepared to launch military action, irrespective of whether Britain, the United States and Spain secured a majority vote in the UN for the second resolution they have tabled.

A senior minister told the Telegraph: "Win or lose at the UN, the Iraqi army will get flattened

quickly. It will be almost immediate. We are not going to hang around."

The right-wing paper quoted an unnamed minister as saying: "There is a sense of immediacy. It will be two, three weeks from now. Not longer. This is a phoney peace."

Britain's Sunday Express tabloid reported that the US and Britain were set to order military strikes within a fortnight on Iraq, which is accused of failing to give up weapons of mass destruction.

The right-wing newspaper said, however, that Blair was convinced that Britain and the US would win backing for a second UN resolution, and the first bombing raids

were expected to swiftly follow the vote.

Along with Spain and the US, Britain has sponsored a new resolution declaring Iraq in non-compliance with earlier UN demands that it disarm, which would in effect authorise the use of force against President Saddam Hussein's regime.

Reuters from Baghdad adds: Iraq began destroying six more al-Samoud missiles under the supervision of UN inspectors yesterday, stepping up efforts to eliminate the banned weapon as it tries to avert a possible US-led invasion.

Baghdad began dismantling the missile programme by destroying

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Dhaka University burn an effigy of US President George W Bush on the campus yesterday to protest the US push for war against Iraq.

Graft case Charges framed against Saber, two others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Special Court for Dhaka Division yesterday framed charges against Awami League leader and former deputy minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury and two others in a graft case.

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq fixed April 6 for trial of the case.

The two other accused are former chief engineer of the Local Government Directorate Monwar Hossain and former project director Amirul Morshed.

The accused pleaded not guilty and demanded justice before the court.

In the case filed with Mohamadpur police station, on December 11, 2001, it was alleged that the former minister in collusion with two others misappropriated Tk 17.50 crore from a rural infrastructure development scheme under the Food for Work Programme.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) submitted a charge sheet against the accused on October 27, 2002.

All the accused are now on bail.

Shuvra Dev put behind bars again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Popular Singer Shuvra Dev was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail after he surrendered before the Additional District Magistrate (ADM)'s Court, Dhaka yesterday as directed earlier by the Supreme Court (SC).

A surrender petition was filed by Shuvra Dev's lawyer who accompanied his client to the court at 11:00am yesterday.

The petition said Shuvra Dev was arrested on December 5 last year on charge of attempting to smuggle listed criminal Abdur Rashid alias Kala Faruque out of the country as member of a cultural team. Shuvra Dev was given one month's detention under the Special Powers Act 1974 on December 10 last year.

A writ petition was then filed with the High Court (HC) challenging the legality of the detention order and the court issued a rule in this regard, the petition said.

After hearing the writ petition, the HC discharged the rule and declared his detention legal. Later, a leave to appeal challenging the HC verdict was filed with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court on January 26 granted bail to Shuvra Dev till February 24 and fixed February 25 for hearing on the leave of appeal. After the hearing, the Appellate Division dismissed the appeal and upheld the HC verdict declaring his detention legal. The court also cancelled Shuvra's bail and asked him to surrender before the lower court within seven days, the petition added.

As per the SC directive, Shuvra Dev appeared before the ADM's court yesterday which ordered him to jail after hearing his surrender petition.

Chief whip hospitalised

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Whip Khondakar Delwar Hossain was admitted to the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital yesterday following a severe pain in his lower abdomen.

He is now under treatment of liver specialist Prof Mobin Khan, said a Parliament Secretariat press release.

Dhaka, Yangon to set up taskforce for road link

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Myanmar yesterday decided to set up a task force to work out details of the proposed road link between the two close neighbours.

The decision was taken at a meeting between Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and his Myanmar counterpart U Wing Aung here.

The hour-long meeting focussed on bilateral matters as well as economic cooperation, Foreign Secretary Shamsheer M Chowdhury told newsmen.

The two foreign ministers, he said, also discussed the possibility of a tripartite coastal shipping arrangement among Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand.

Besides, they decided on setting up a joint commission at foreign ministers level, which

would meet annually.

However, the commission will be finalised during the forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to Myanmar.

The date of the visit is being worked out between the two countries, the Foreign Secretary said.

The Myanmar foreign minister, who came to Dhaka at the invitation of Morshed Khan, handed over a letter of invitation to the Prime Minister from Than Shew, Chairman of the state peace and development council.

On repatriation of the remaining Rohingya refugees, Shamsheer said, the Myanmar foreign minister gave full assurance of taking them back following verification. Both the sides were optimistic that the issue would be resolved as soon as possible.

Bangladesh, he said, was

assured of full support and cooperation of Myanmar in securing membership of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

The two sides agreed to work together towards an eventual Summit of BIMSTEC member countries, he said.

During the meeting, held in an extremely cordial and friendly atmosphere, the two foreign ministers favoured enhancement of cooperation in the field of trade, commerce and business between two neighbors.

They hoped the visit of Prime Minister Begum Zia would further reinforce the sense of goodwill which was generated during the Than Shew's visit to Dhaka.

Foreign secretary Shamsheer M Chowdhury and Myanmar ambassador to Bangladesh U Ohn Thwin were present at the meeting.

Sylhet City Corporation polls Campaign frenzy on high pitch

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

With only 19 days to the first mayoral election in Sylhet City Corporation, top leaders of the ruling and opposition parties have joined the campaign to ensure victory of their party-backed candidates in the "prestige fight".

Ruling BNP's stalwart Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, who is also the MP from Sylhet Sadar constituency, has asked the party rank and file to ensure victory of local party leader MA Haque in the March 20 election.

In the last two weeks, he made frequent visits to Sylhet and attended various programmes designed to win vote for Haque, president of district BNP. All the four party MPs from the district are also campaigning for him.

Prime Minister and BNP chief Khaleda Zia is also scheduled to lay the foundation of the country's first hanging bridge on the Surma river in the city on March 10 at a public function.

Leaders and workers of Jamaat-e-Islami, BNP partner in the Four-Party Alliance, are also campaigning for Haque.

The alliance is trying to convince the people to vote for the ruling party leader for "continua-

tion of development activities".

But Haque has two party rivals in the mayoral race.

Awami League is also not lagging behind. AL leaders think their candidate mayor-in-charge Badar Uddin Kamran is in a "better position" as he has no rival from the party.

Kamran was elected ward commissioner thrice earlier. He was elected pourasabha chairman in 1995 and made mayor when the pourasabha was upgraded to city corporation.

AL central leaders like Abdus Samad Azad MP, General Secretary Abdul Jalil MP, Suranjit Sengupta MP, AMA Muhit, Sultan Mohammad Mansur and others have already visited the city and joined programmes in favour of Kamran.

Party chief Sheikh Hasina is also scheduled to visit Sylhet days ahead of the election, party sources said.

Sources in BNP claimed that though Haque enjoys special blessings of Saifur Rahman, his two party rivals AFM Kamal and advocate Shamsuzzaman Zaman--also have considerable influence in the party rank and file and may bag a

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Criminal rivalry behind Rafi's murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

College student Wazed Ali Khan Rafi might have been killed over rivalry with his friends, police suspect.

Police said Rafi, 19, whose slaughtered body was found in Nayatola on Saturday noon, was a criminal.

Recently, he got involved in a feud with some of his criminal friends of Nayatola. This might have led to the killing, police said.

His family members also said something was bothering Rafi for sometime.

A few days before the killing, he told his family members that he was in trouble and nobody could solve it.

Rafi, a second-year student of the Sheikh Borhan Uddin College, was arrested one and a half years ago for his alleged involvement in crime. He was later released on bail.

Police arrested a youth from Maghbazar area yesterday morning in connection with the killing of Rafi.

Clarification

Director of news of Bangladesh Betar Imam Hossain Khan has given a clarification on a news item titled "Birth date commotion in Betar" published in The Daily Star on February 24.

He said, "the birth date issue, that arose following a silly printing mistake in the graduation list approved by the authorities concerned, was settled through due departmental proceedings initiated by the ministry of information."

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Mar 3		6-02 pm
Mar 4	6-18 am	

Prayer Timings		
Mar 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	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