



New clues hint at new suspects

Seizure list excludes BNP leader's car left on the jetty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigation has taken a dramatic turn with latest clues hinting at some coalition leaders' involvement in country's largest arms smuggling in Chittagong on Friday.

They suspect the ruling alliance leaders, including a stalwart, were in

charge of handling the deadly consignment of rockets, rocket launchers, submachine-guns, AK-47 rifles and bullets after its delivery at high sea from a cargo vessel bound for Chittagong port.

Customs officials said they were examining the documents of three vessels, two fishing trawlers and a

ship owned by a top BNP leader -- for being involved in the latest smuggling of the arms cache.

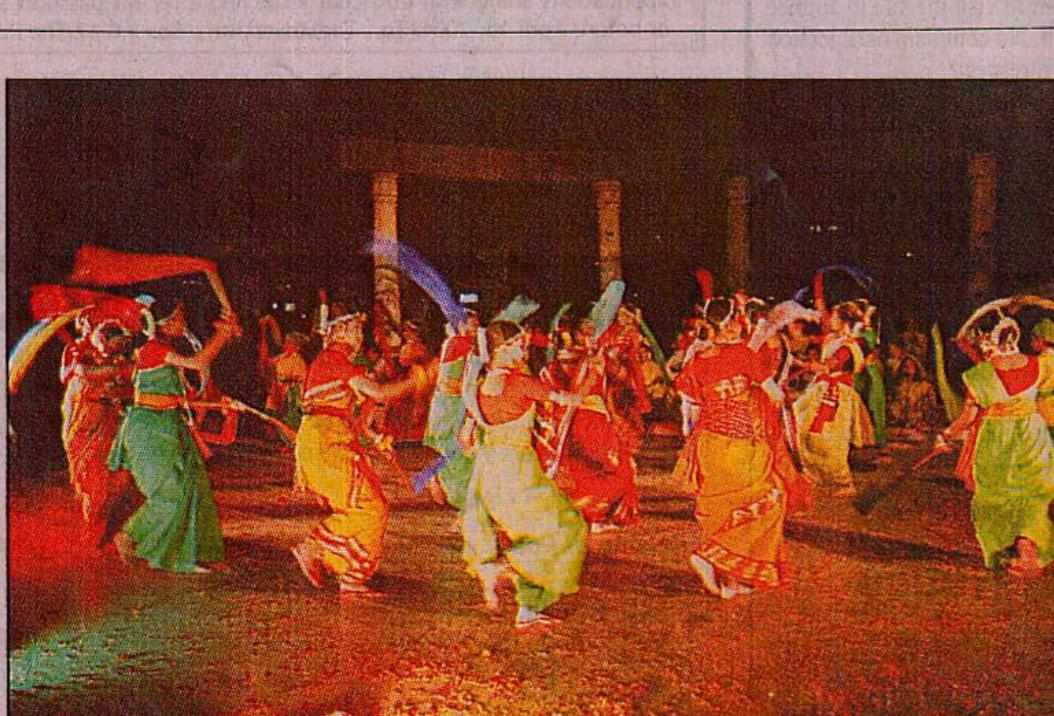
Intelligence agents alleged a local BNP legislator's brother, who was accused of part in the abduction of magnate Jamaluddin Ahmed, played the key role in the transport of the cache after its delivery off

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Chittagong coast. He is accused of running a giant smuggling syndicate on Arwara and Patiya coasts in collusion with law enforcement agencies.

They also alleged labour leader Dil Mohammad employed workers at Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited

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Women stage a dance sequence at the amphitheatre by Dhanmondi lake at a colourful function of spring celebrations yesterday.

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59 including 8 GIs die in Iraq violence

AGENCIES, Baghdad

US helicopters yesterday blasted targets in Baghdad in an intensifying showdown with Shia Muslim radicals resisting America's postwar plans for Iraq.

Supporters of cleric Moqtada al-Sadr rioted in Baghdad and four other Iraqi cities, sparking fighting that killed at least 50 Iraqis, eight US

troops and a Salvadoran soldier, in the worst unrest since the spasm of looting and arson immediately after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

The fiercest battle took place Sunday in the streets of Sadr City, Baghdad's largest Shia neighbourhood, where Shia militiamen fired from rooftops and behind buildings at US troops, killing seven Americans. At least 28 Iraqis were

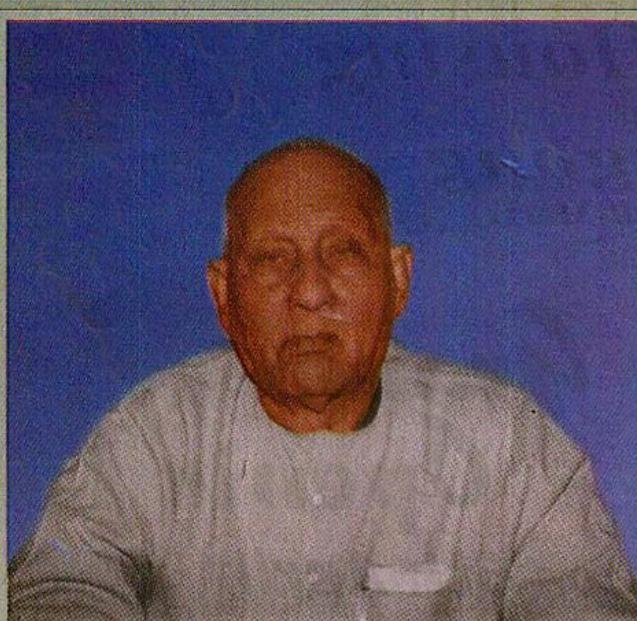
killed in the fighting, a doctor at one local hospital said Monday.

In fighting in the holy city of Najaf Sunday, two soldiers -- a Salvadoran and an American -- died and at least nine other soldiers were wounded, the Spanish Defence Ministry said. Twenty-two Iraqis died and more than 200 were wounded, said Falah Mohammed, director of the Najaf

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6th death anniversary



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We pray for the salvation of his departed soul. May almighty Allah bless him with Jannatul Ferdous.

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CTG ARMS HAUL
Home secy
heads probe,
CMP DC
excluded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A committee headed by Home Secretary Omar Farooq yesterday opened an investigation into the smuggling of 10 truckloads of firearms and ammunition, three days after joint forces seized the largest ever weapons cache in Chittagong.

The committee was scaled down to five members as Deputy Commissioner (port) Abdullahil Bakri of Chittagong Metropolitan Police was excluded from the list of investigators in the wake of his controversial role in Friday's arms bust.

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Gun smuggling
plotted in
Bangkok

Indian top cop says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian newspaper The Daily Telegraph (TDF) yesterday quoted the top Indian police as saying that insurgent leaders of its northeastern states held a meeting in Bangkok on March 16, which decided to send two major consignments of arms and ammunition to militants to the Northeast through Cox's Bazar.

"It was on March 16 that a meeting of insurgent leaders had been held in Bangkok under the auspices of the ISI (Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence), and therein it was finalised," Director-General of Indian police GM GM Srivastava was quoted as telling the TDF.

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Pak troops
closing in
on Laden?

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistani forces are closing in on a remote corner of rugged mountains and forest-clad gorges on the Afghan frontier where some people believe Osama bin Laden could be hiding.

The Shawal valley on the border in Pakistan's North Waziristan tribal area has long been a no-go area for Pakistani troops, where Pashtun tribes have ruled without interference for generations and fugitives

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PRICE HIKE
Parliamentary probe
in wilderness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary sub-committee tasked with finding out the reasons for price spiral of essentials five months ago is dragging its feet on the probe, while the main body is not sitting in meetings in a parody of parliamentary rules.

The parliamentary standing committee on the commerce ministry formed the sub-committee on

November 5 and asked it to come up with a report in seven days rejecting a ministry report that highlighted its limitations to control market prices.

But the main committee, yet to sit in a meeting since December 31 in violation of the rules of procedure that requires such committees on ministries to meet at least once a month, now appears reluctant to discuss the issue.

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Yuvraj, Gul shine
on Day One

REUTERS, Lahore

Yuvraj Singh struck a swashbuckling maiden Test century on Monday to help India reach a fighting 287 on the first day of the second Test

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Jamaat MP's nephew,
others held with
AK-47 after gunbattle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Among the arrestees, Mohammad Monzur identified himself as the nephew of Shahjahan Chowdhury, local lawmaker of the ruling coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami, sources said.

The firefight came at about 11:00am three days after joint forces

Sub-Inspector Shahdara Khan and Assistant Sub-Inspector Hafi and an operative known as Sagir suffered bullet wounds in the gunfight that rocked the village predominantly of Jamaat adherents in Satkania upazila, 48 kilometres off the port city.

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Lightning
kills four in
Kurigram

BSS, Rangpur

Four people, including a father and his daughter, were killed, while five others suffered serious burns being struck by lightning during a nor'wester Sunday morning.

The victims are Lal Miah, 35, his daughter Nazma Khatun, 14, of Fulurchar village, Chhina Begum, 35, wife of Raham Ali, of Dakshin Tapur Char village, and Sober Ali, 39, of Ghughnami village.

Locals said the nor'wester, a tropical seasonal storm, cut a swathe through a vast area of Bondoer Union Parishad under Rouramia upazila in Kurigram, ravaging Boro rice in 100 acres of land and

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Body found on
DIG office
premises

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The body of a slaughtered young man was found on the deputy inspector general's (DIG) office premises here yesterday morning, prompting local people to blame police for the murder and stage demonstrations in protest.

The victim, Masud Rana Howlader, 23, was a resident of Goalpara in Kashipur Ward of the city and owner of a workshop at Nathulabad.

Local people alleged they saw blood stains and other evidence of the murder were being erased from the spot in the presence of police and blocked the Barisal-Dhaka highway for about an hour demanding proper action against the killers.

Masud went out for his

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Dhaka-Yangon
highway stone
laid at Ramu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foundation stone for Bangladesh-Myanmar Friendship Highway was laid at Ramu yesterday and Myanmar Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, who witnessed the ceremony, said the initiative will strengthen friendship between the two brotherly nations.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda and Myanmar Transport Minister Major General Hla Myint Swe laid the foundation stone for the 133-km highway that is expected to be complete in a year and a half.

"It will also intensify the old

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transfusion
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injunctions
&
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social bondage

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