

Japan indicts 2 Bangladeshis for al-Qaeda 'ties'

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese prosecutors said yesterday they had indicted three foreigners with suspected links to al-Qaeda for alleged violation of immigration laws.

Two Bangladeshi nationals identified as Ahmed Faishal, 26, and Mohammed Muktar Hossain, 29, along with Kane Yaya, a 41-year-old man from Mali, had been staying illegally in Japan, the Tokyo District Prosecutors Office said in a statement.

Faishal sneaked into the country after travelling by ship from South Korea around January 1997, and Hossain came to Japan in February 2000 on a fake passport, it said.

Yaya overstayed his visa, which expired in October 1989, the statement said, without elaborating.

Officials at the office declined to comment further, only saying the three foreign nationals were believed to have links with al-Qaeda.

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The three winners of a contest themed 'Be a Lux Star and Go to Mumbai, Live Like Aishwarya' pose for photos at a gala ceremony Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd organised at the National Press Club yesterday. (Story on Page 3)

PHOTO: STAR

PM for highest security for VVIPs

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said it is imperative to bring a change in the paradigm of security for the VVIPs in the context of current situation at home and abroad.

However, she noted that providing foolproof security to the VVIPs and their public relations are equally important to the dignitaries.

"Neither of these is less important and one should not be affected by the other," the prime minister said, adding that distance should not be created between the people and the VVIPs in the name of security.

"You should rather perform the tough responsibility and duty of ensuring highest possible security maintaining normal interaction of the VVIPs with the people," she told the members of the elite Special Security Force (SSF) at the 18th founding-anniversary function of the SSF at Senakunja yesterday evening.

"Building up an effective security system is a matter of top professionalism and skill," she told the security officials.

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Kidnapping goes unabated in west

Govt staff in Kushtia, 2 others in Chuadanga abducted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A government employee was abducted from his workplace in Kushtia on Monday night and two others were kidnapped in Chuadanga at about the same time.

The abductors later demanded Tk 2 lakh from each of the victims' families for their release, family sources said.

Kushtia police said an armed gang led by one Ripon stormed into Khalisakundi telephone exchange at about 11:00pm and abducted Mir Alim, 30, telephone operator, while he was on duty. Alim hails from Mohonnagar in Daulatpur upazila.

Sources said the gang had earlier pressed the operator to allow them to make telephone calls

on nominal payment. As he did not agree to that, they threatened him with dire consequences.

A case was filed with Daulatpur Police Station.

In Chuadanga, outlaws kidnapped two young men from their houses at Baraputimari village in Alamdanga upazila.

Police said a gang of 10 equipped with firearms entered the house of Thaza Ali at about midnight and abducted his son Bilal Hossain, 28.

The outlaws then went to an adjacent house and kidnapped house owner Arshad Ali's son Badar Uddin, 28.

They later asked the two families to pay them Tk 2 lakh each within 24 hours.

They threatened to kill both if

the money was not paid and police were informed about this, family sources said.

At least 120 people were abducted in the two districts in the last five months. Of them, 75 people including 25 students of schools and colleges, were kidnapped in Kushtia and 45 in Chuadanga.

In Kushtia, abductors killed nine of the 75 people as their families could not pay ransom as demanded. Police rescued only four, seven were still missing and others were freed by their captors.

In Chuadanga, kidnapers killed at least 20 out of the 45 people. Cadres of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddha) carried out most of

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High revenue target to tax SMEs

Speakers say at CPD roundtable on budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said the government's revenue target for fiscal year (FY) 2004-05 was very high and the expansion of the Vat net would ultimately affect small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and import-substitute industries.

They termed the proposed budget for FY05 ambitious and emphasised proper implementation of the social safety net programmes it puts forward to ensure that the benefits reach the target groups.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a leading independent think-tank of the country, organised the discussion at the CIRDAP auditorium with CPD chief Prof

Rehman Sobhan in the chair.

Presenting the CPD's observations on the proposed budget, its Executive Director Debapriya Bhattacharya said Bangladesh is a low-income and under-invested country, where huge amount of money remains unused. He also pointed out that the amount of unused foreign aid, which is in the pipeline, would be around \$7 billion.

According to Debapriya, resource is not a problem in this country; rather, the problem is poor delivery mechanism.

Former commerce minister and frontline BNP leader Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury observed

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Nurul Islam gets bail

UNB, Dhaka

AHM Nurul Islam, who was forced into retirement as acting secretary to the prime minister and accused of corruption and violating service rules, was granted one month's anticipatory bail by the High Court yesterday.

The bench comprising Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice AKM Asaduzzaman also issued rule asking the government to explain why the petitioner should not be granted regular bail.

The orders came upon a petition filed by Nurul Islam who surrendered before the court and sought bail to avert arrest.

After retirement on June 3, he was reportedly under strict surveillance of intelligence agencies.

The case was filed with Tejgaon police against Nurul Islam on June 7.

Dr Kamal Hossain appeared for the petitioner.

Attacks on Bikalpa procession: 20 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 20 people, 10 of them women, were wounded yesterday when their campaign procession supporting Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) candidate Major (retired) Abdul Mannan for Dhaka-10 by-election came under attack twice at Railway Colony near the Police Headquarters.

The attackers, who were chanting 'paddy sheaf', the election symbol of ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), also damaged a microbus of the Mannan camp, witnesses said.

As police remained inactive during the attack, Abdul Mannan was forced to take shelter in a dormitory of Dhaka University while BDB leader Mahi B Chowdhury in the Police Headquarters, witnesses continued.

Locals said Abdul Mannan

started his scheduled mass contact programme in No. 56 ward by bringing out a procession yesterday morning. More than 500 BDB activists including about 100 women participated in the procession.

Sources said as soon as the procession entered the Railway Colony, opposite to the Police Headquarters, reportedly 50 to 60 supporters of local ward commissioner armed with firearms, knives and hockey sticks ringed the procession and indiscriminately beat the BDB processionists.

The BDB supporters initially tried to put up a resistance but later gave in and fled the scene as the attackers were wielding firearms.

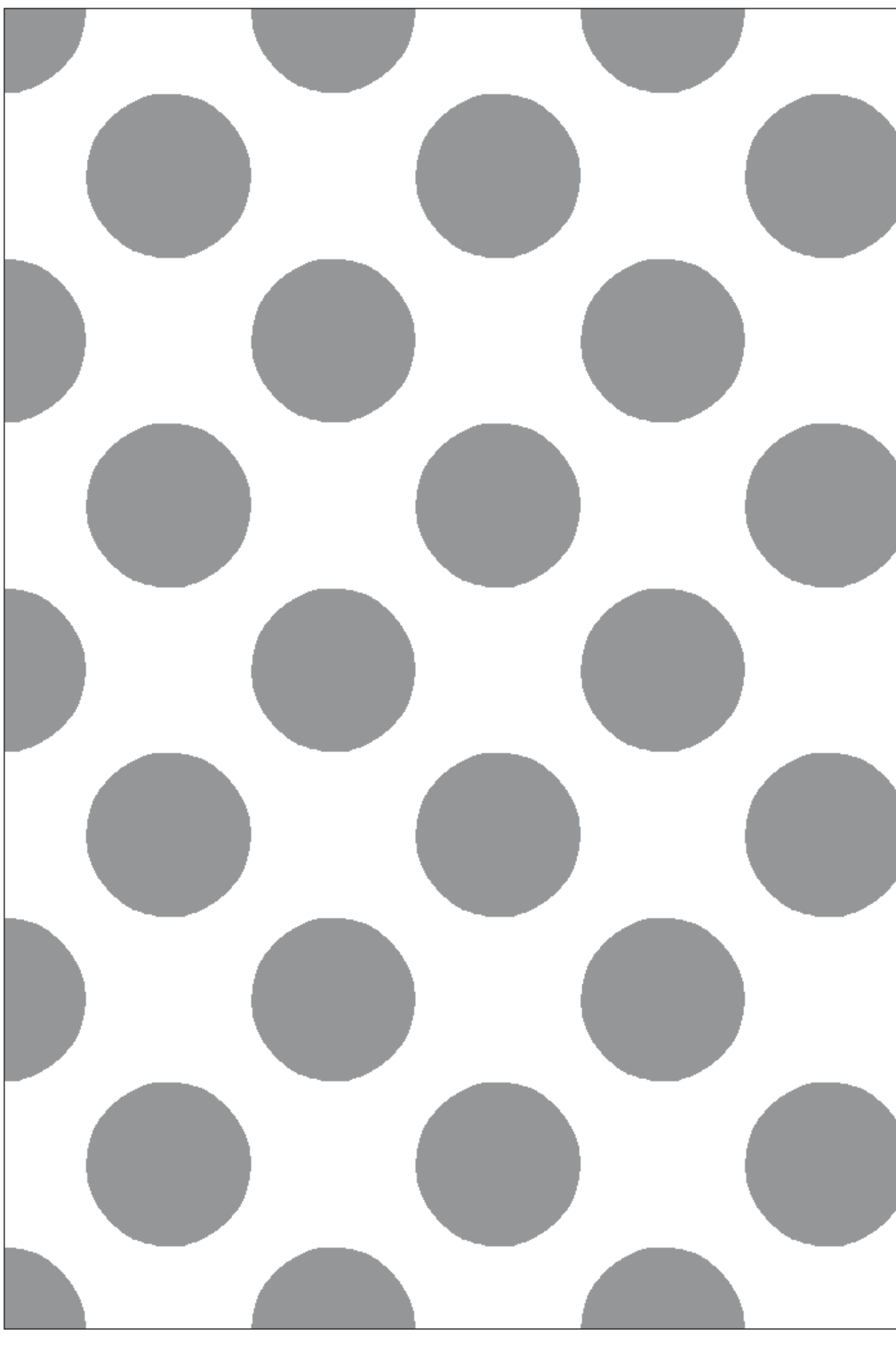
The attackers pelted Abdul Mannan with stones. He got into a vehicle and took shelter in Shahidullah Hall of Dhaka University.

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Visitors see around stalls at a three-day mango festival organised by the Department of Agriculture Extension that began on the Krishibid Institution premises in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Raul dilemma



AFP, Lisbon

Spain coach Inaki Saez is coming under pressure to drop the country's record goalscorer Raul after a poor match in Spain's Euro 2004 opener and an indifferent season for Real Madrid.

Raul looked ineffective against Russia on Saturday and was replaced by Fernando Torres with 20 minutes remaining of a match which Spain eventually won 1-0 with a goal from another substitute, Juan Carlos Valeron.

The calls have begun in the outspoken Spanish press for Saez to cut the emotional ties with a player who only turns 27 on June 27 but whose 38 goals in 73 appearances for his country make him the

highest scorer in the nation's history.

Many observers argue that attack-minded midfielder Valeron, who played a major role in Deportivo La Coruna's charge to the Champions League semi-finals this year, deserves a place in the starting lineup for Wednesday's Group A match against surprise package Greece.

Readers of one Spanish sports paper criticised Raul on Monday, something that would have been unthinkable at the start of the 2003-2004 season when the Spanish media pushed for the striker to be

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TODAY'S MATCHES		
SPAIN vs GREECE	Live at 9:55 pm	
PORTUGAL vs RUSSIA	Live at 12:40 am (Thursday)	

DPRK envoy passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

North Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Kang Chong-Ryol died of chronic liver ailments at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) yesterday. He was 67.

The envoy was admitted to the hospital at 10:30am in an unconscious

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Cops club garment workers: 30 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 30 people including five policemen were injured when a clash between garment workers agitating for the payment of outstanding salaries and police broke out in Rajakhali under Bakolia Police Station in the city yesterday.

Police and witnesses said for the last three days, workers of Unity Garments of Rajakhali area had been demanding immediate payment of seven months' outstanding salaries.

When some 500 workers yesterday came to their work, they found the factory closed without notice at around 8.30am. They got furious and began ransacking the factory.

Police called by the factory authorities baton charged the workers and lobbed tear gas to disperse them. It prompted the

workers, along with the locals, to pelt the law enforcers with brick-bats and set fire to a police vehicle. They also disconnected the power supplying line to the factory, witnesses said.

Police picked up around 50 people, mostly female workers of the garment factory, from the spot

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Prayer Timing		
June 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation