

US wants to crush tentacles of Khan's nuke network

AFP, Islamabad

The United States wants to crush the "tentacles" of a black market run by Pakistan's disgraced nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, visiting Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Thursday.

Pakistan admitted last week that Khan had supplied Iran with centrifuges, used to enrich uranium for atomic warheads, but it said the government was not involved and has refused to give him up for questioning by other countries.

"It is a network that we want to make certain that its tentacles are broken up as well," Rice told a press conference after talks with Pakistani leaders.

She said the United States has had cooperation from Pakistan to try to ensure the network is broken up and to get as much information as possible.

"I do not doubt that we all have an interest in knowing what happened, that we all have (an) interest in making sure that this network cannot... continue to operate

in any way," she told a joint press conference with her Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Kasuri.

Khan, who is considered a national hero in Pakistan and is

CCC voter list finalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, City

A new voter list for the upcoming Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) election slated for May 9 was finalised yesterday.

The office of Deputy Election Commission, Chittagong region, made public the list of about 11.47 lakh voters yesterday evening.

After scrutinising the voter forms submitted until Wednesday, the commission has listed 53,089 new voters.

Commission sources said anyone who missed the Wednesday deadline can give their names for inclusion in the voter list with the Election Commission in the capital.

the father of its nuclear bomb, confessed in February 2004 to leaking secrets to Iran, North Korea and Libya after a government probe into nuclear proliferation.

Khan was later pardoned by President Pervez Musharraf but has been living under virtual house arrest in Islamabad.

Rice, who is on her first visit to the region since assuming office in January, said Washington still wanted to know how the network was able to operate.

"Most importantly we all have an interest in knowing how it happened, so that we can safeguard against this kind of black market entrepreneurship in the future," she said.

Pakistan has repeatedly said it would not allow any foreign country or agency to interrogate the nuclear scientist, despite its admission that Khan supplied Iran with centrifuges.

Washington believes the technology has enabled Iran to enrich uranium to a level required for making nuclear weapons.



Garment workers waving red flags demonstrate against a government notification setting a 72-hour workweek for them and demanding minimum wages at Muktangan in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Invective at media worries journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and its affiliated unions yesterday expressed deep concern over invective directed at newspapers from the top level of the government.

The BFUJ leaders said earlier the speaker and deputy speaker of parliament, and several state and deputy ministers of the government made various irresponsible comments on newspapers; now the prime minister and ministers for important sectors including finance, foreign affairs, water resources, industries and communications have joined the lawmakers in blasting the mass media.

Such anti-media speeches by the high-ups in the government would embolden field level officials and staff loyal to the government to repress journalists, they said.

In a statement the BFUJ leaders condemned incidents like Rab members beating up photojournalists in the capital, preventing newsmen from entering into the Sangsad Bhaban and party cadres threatening, torturing and killing journalists.

They protested against such random comments, repression and threats on journalists, and decided to hold a protest rally at the National Press Club on March 21 morning demanding trial of the killers of journalists.

The leaders affirmed that journalists would never bow down to any threats while discharging their duties.

They asked the political leaders to restrain their indiscriminate comments and come up with specific allegations, if any, to settle

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Ruling coalition patronising militancy

Roundtable in city told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the mainstream opposition parties and civil society members at a roundtable in the capital yesterday accused the ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami of directly patronising religious extremist groups in the country that are posing a threat to its independence.

They said at least 29 Islamist militant outfits are active in the country, most of them linked to Jamaat and a few to the BNP.

Pro-liberation and secular forces must unite to eliminate these anti-liberation groups as division among them has created scope for these groups to organise themselves and make the country unstable, the leaders said.

The Workers Party of Bangladesh organised the roundtable on "Militancy in the name of Islam and the role of government". Held at the Jatiya Press Club, it was addressed by leaders of the Awami League (AL), Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), Gono Forum, Gano Azadi League and Samyabadi Dal, and writers, university teachers and senior journalists.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil

said it will be very tough to resist the militant Islamist outfits backed by the BNP-Jamaat coalition unless all sections of people take a firm stand against them immediately.

"Although the government denies the existence of any Islamist extremist groups, it has banned two such groups in the face of international pressure," he added.

Jalil urged all like-minded parties to jointly organise a grand rally in Rajshahi region where such militant outfits are more active than in other regions.

All pro-liberation parties and forces should now leave aside their ideological differences and stand united to unseat the present government, he stressed.

AL central leader Amir Hossain Amu said BNP is virtually serving the interest of Jamaat, which has a plan to capture state power.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of the CPB, emphasised the need for spreading the movement against communal forces to rural areas to root out them.

"CPB continues a simultaneous out-governments movement based

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Two temples rampaged, idols looted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Hoodlums attacked two temples at Sandira village of Adamdighi upazila in the district on Thursday night and plundered four heads of deities' idols, causing anger among the local Hindu community.

They intruded into the Sarbajanin Temple at Sandira village and ransacked two idols of Laxmi and Kali. The intruders then took away the heads of the deities along with the seats.

In the same way, nearby Girjanath Temple was attacked and the heads of Narayan and Barun were removed.

Locals suspect Khalilur Rahman and another villager, who have been claiming to own some land of the temple and had earlier attacked the temples four times, might be behind the incidents.

Road accidents kill 12 in 4 districts

3 of a family die in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve people died and 33 others were injured in road accidents in Dhaka, Jessore, Faridpur and Nilphamari yesterday.

Three members of a family died and two others were injured when a BRTC double-decker bus hit an auto-rickshaw from behind at Badda in the capital.

The dead are Hirona Begum, 25, her daughter Mitu, 3, and her sister-in-law Fathema Akhter, 18.

The injured—Mohammad Helal, 45, father-in-law of Hirona, and autorickshaw driver Kabir Hossain, 32, are undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

Family sources said the victims

were returning home at Nayanagar near Natunbazar in Badda by the auto-rickshaw after visiting a relative's house at Agargaon.

Police said the BRTC bus hit the auto-rickshaw when it was passing the Natunbazar area on Pragati Sarani at about 4:00pm.

On information, police rushed to the spot and took the dead and injured to the DMCH. They (police) seized the bus, but its driver and helpers escaped.

Our Jessore correspondent reported that three people were killed and five others wounded in two separate road accidents in the district yesterday.

A speeding bus crashed into a tempo at Monirampur at about

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Galib's 10-day remand ends

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Asadullah-Al-Galib, chief of Ahle Hadith Andolon, Bangladesh, was brought to Gaibandha from Joint Interrogation Cell in Dhaka after completion of his 10-day remand under tight police escort yesterday.

The militant leader, now in jail custody, will be produced before the court today in connection with bomb attacks -- one on Mahimaganj Brac office on February 10 this year and another on a jatra (open air drama) in Takiar Bazar under Palashbari upazila on December 20 last year.

After confessional statement of 17 militants arrested earlier, police arrested Galib in connection with the two bomb attack cases.

Forex worth Tk 27.5 lakh seized at ZIA, one held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials seized foreign currencies worth about Tk 27.57 lakh from a Hong Kong bound passenger at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday.

Tipped off by an unknown caller, the customs officials took position on boarding bridge No. 3 for Flight BG-078 and stopped one Zakir Hossain Majumder on suspicion at about 11:25am. They recovered euro, Hong Kong and US dollars, Chinese and Bangladeshi currencies from him.

Zakir was handed over to Airport Police Station where a case was filed against him, says a press release.

In another operation customs officials seized foreign medicine worth about Tk 3.54 lakh from one Asadur Rahman soon after he had arrived at the ZIA from Chittagong by a flight.

The medicines without valid documents include aphrodisiacs like Viagra, a customs official said.

Prayer Timing

March 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-14	6-18
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation