

Pak scientist gave nuke design to DPRK: Musharraf

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has confirmed that the country's disgraced nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan provided North Korea with centrifuges and their designs, a report said Wednesday.

But military ruler Musharraf, who was speaking to Japan's Kyodo news agency, said the high-technology equipment handed over by Khan did not play a major role in giving Pyongyang a nuclear weapons capability.

"Yes, he passed centrifuges — parts and complete. I do not exactly remember the number," Musharraf was quoted as saying when asked to comment on reports that Islamabad told Tokyo that Khan gave about 20 centrifuges to North Korea.

In February 2004, Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, admitted selling atomic secrets to the Stalinist state as well as Libya and Iran. He said he acted without government or military support.

Enriched uranium, made by passing a uranium gas through a series, or cascade, of centrifuge machines, can be fuel for civilian nuclear power reactors or the raw material for atom bombs.

General Musharraf said Khan's help would not have been decisive to North Korea's efforts to become a

nuclear power because he was not involved in other crucial areas of technology, such as a trigger system. "So if North Korea has made a bomb... Dr. A.Q. Khan's part is only enriching the uranium to weapons grade," Musharraf told Kyodo.

"He does not know about making the bomb, he does not know about the trigger mechanism, he does not know about the delivery system."

North Korea declared in June that it has a stockpile of nuclear weapons and is producing more.

Six-party nuclear talks on denuclearising the Korean peninsula, also involving United States, South Korea, Russia, China and Japan, are due to resume in the week of August 29.

Pakistan has consistently refused to let international investigators question Khan. The scientist has been officially pardoned by Musharraf but he has remained under virtual house arrest ever since.

On Monday, UN nuclear inspectors said that enriched uranium particles found in Iran were from smuggled Pakistani centrifuges, backing Iran's claims that it is not involved in enrichment work.

The United States says such activity would show that Tehran is secretly trying to develop nuclear weapons.

Hygiene missing

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"It is really a good sign that they are not using chemicals in their product. But the environment of the factory is not very good. The staff were wearing dirty cloths, so we fined them," said the magistrate.

Another mobile court, led by Magistrate ABM Abdul Fattah, raided three confectioneries in Uttar Badda and collected Tk 95,000 in fines for using unsafe chemicals and colours in different food items.

The court also raided a sweet-meat factory, New Kalachand Mistanno Bhandar, and fined Tk 10,000, but, as the workers failed to pay the fine, the court sentenced one Md Salim Miah of them to three months' jail.

Another mobile court led by Magistrate Mizanur Rahman collected Tk 44,000 in fines from eight restaurants in the Farmgate and Khamarbari areas.

"The condition of the small restaurants were very bad. The Chinese and big restaurants were found in comparatively better shape," said the magistrate.

The mobile court of the Dhaka City Corporation did not conduct any operation yesterday.

According to a government press release, the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) fined different food traders, restaurant owners and owners of cloth shops Tk 66,000 in Rajshahi. During the raid, the authorities filed 17 cases against 11 businessmen, the release added.

Lalmatia college

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next day when I went to Shuin's house I found the door locked," said Zahir. Sharif, who hails from Kishoreganj, could not be found.

"As the lockers were broken and cloths and other goods were in disarray, Sharif might have killed the woman and looted some valuables," said Harun-ur-Rashid, officer-in-charge (OC) of Dhanmondi Police Station.

The OC said a driver of a nearby house saw a youth leaving the house carrying a small package at 3:00pm on Tuesday.

Shuin, the mother of two, was divorced seven years ago after a long conjugal life with a paediatric surgeon, Dr Abul Kalam Azad Chowdhury.

"My sister was a bit stubborn. We asked her not to live alone, but she never paid heed to us," said Jahangir. Shuin's brother, Kazi Shahidul Alam, filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station accusing Sharif of murder.

Shuin was buried at Banani graveyard yesterday after an autopsy.

On March 7, Dr Nazneen Akhter, 45, and her domestic help Parveen, 20, were slaughtered inside her Dhanmondi home, which was locked from the outside.

Saarc information

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common agenda on the development of the information sector, official sources said.

The last meeting held in Islamabad had agreed to implement 11 of the 19 points.

Sources said the Katmandu meet, to be chaired by Nepalese Information and Communications Minister Tanka Dhakal, will address the remaining points and send its recommendations to the 13th Saarc Summit to be held in Dhaka on November 12-13.

After the fourth ministerial meeting held in Pakistan last year, a Saarc Information Centre was established in Nepal in May this year to pursue a collective agenda for the development of the information sector in the region.

As per the action plan, the upcoming ministerial meet will discuss the Trans National Satellite Broadcasting in the Saarc region as well as the update on the implementation of the Saarc Round-Up (monthly TV news bulletin) and Saarc News (weekly radio news bulletin) on their respective national channels.

It will also discuss holding a variety of activities on regular basis, including activities using advanced technology such as simultaneous auto-translation of the programmes into the national languages of the member countries and the Saarc Radio Quiz in 2005 by teleconferencing as a test case.

The action plan also envisions a Saarc Feature Film Festival to be aired on all national TV channels as well as setting up a Saarc Media Development Fund.

The meeting is also expected to consider the recommendations made by the 2nd Conference of the Editors and Working Journalists regarding free movement of accredited media personnel within the region on the basis of reciprocity.

The Saarc, which was established in 1985, includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

US sees

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terror and holding them to account. When asked about the steps taken by Washington against terrorist organisations that took the responsibility for August 17 bombings in Bangladesh claiming to have links with al-Qaeda, the spokesman said the US put out a statement condemning these acts of terror.

"I know the Bangladesh government is working very hard to identify the individuals responsible for these acts and certainly we stand with them as they search for these individuals and ultimately hold them to account for what they've done. We work — in general terms, we work closely with Bangladesh on matters of combating terrorism and I think that we're in full agreement on the need to fight terrorism," he said.

However, the spokesman did not specify the exact action Washington took on reported help Bangladesh sought from the US to investigate all major bomb incidents.

India carrying out

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discuss the bomb blast issue, they said Bangladesh media is 'creating panic in the name of bomb blast coverage'.

"Our prime concern is India's anti-Bangladesh propaganda. We'll have to tell them that we'll stop co-operation if they don't stop the campaign," journalist Sadek Khan said at a roundtable discussion at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

India cannot accept Bangladesh's independent existence and is now running a campaign saying Bangladesh is threat for them, he said, adding the country wants to see unrest in Bangladesh as in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Jatiya Nagrik Forum organised the discussion on 'August 17 Bombing: Our National Security'. Forum chief election commissioner (CEC) Justice Abdur Rouf demanded making public the probe reports of previous bomb attacks. "If the government doesn't do so, we'll take it for granted that it has been bribed and we'll go for legal action," he said.

Demanding a standing committee on security, he said, "We want to know what action the government has taken against the home ministry and law enforcers for their failure."

"If I were there (in power), I would have suspended them and set a tribunal for their trial."

He also asked the government to take the matter to the Indian government if Veena Sikri's comment is a violation of diplomatic norms.

The former CEC suggested making military training compulsory for every institution, even, if necessary, for all youths.

Saying it is impossible for Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) to carry out such a country-wide attack, Dr Tareq Shamsur Rahman, a professor of International Relations at Jahangirnagar University, said there is big power behind them.

"We'll have to know why Abdur Rahman (JMB chief) visits India often," he said. "Those who are writing about Talebanism and fundamentalism in Bangladesh hail from India."

Blasting Veena Sikri for her comment, Tareq said: "I see a connection of this statement with those who are behind the August 17 attack."

Terming the Indian High Commissioner's comment as contrary to political decency, Chief Editor of the national news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha Gazilul Hassan Khan said all the

bombs came from India and the people involved in the bombing fled to the same country.

He said all illegal firearms come from the same country, adding: "We'll have to see how India and the US is behaving with us and blaming us."

Bashing Veena Sikri, poet AI Mujahidi said: "How could she be so audacious as to interfere in Bangladesh's internal matters?" He called for unity among Islamist parties.

Former Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University Prof Eusuf Ali, meantime, mentioned that Justice Abdur Rouf was assigned earlier to unite all Islamic parties.

Security expert Brigadier Gen (ret'd) M Shakawat Hossain said, "Some power of the state has to be used, like the August 17 bombing is a manifestation of this."

"Before blaming any foreign power, find our own fault," he suggested, recommending formation of a national security committee in parliament, appointing a non-political person to co-ordinate intelligence reports and brief the prime minister.

Professor Mahbubullah of Dhaka University said problems of national security began during the country's birth. "Tajuddin and other leaders led the Liberation War sitting in India. We'll have to see how independently they could work then."

"Some so-called intellectuals, newspapers and foreign writers are trying to portray Bangladesh as a failed state and I think it is a clear conspiracy to turn the country into a failed state," he said.

Editor of Daily Sangram Abul Asad said, "Who are behind the birth of JMB, JMB (Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh)? Some people instigated some humble men to form the organisations to establish Islamic rule, assuring them of funds. The JMB, JMBB (Research and Analysis Wing, India's intelligence agency) was behind them."

While conducting the discussion, Babul Ahmed, general secretary of Jasas, ruling BNP's cultural wing, said the US is financing some madrasas in Bangladesh to prove its claim of al-Qaeda and Taleban presence in Bangladesh.

Blaming media for portraying a negative image, he said: "The so-called Bangalees who eat in Bangladesh and splutter in India have captured most newspapers and the electronic media."

One killed

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Chuadanga districts.

Police took him to village Malihad in Kushtia to retrieve the firearms at around 3:30am. As police reached the Kushtia-Meherpur highway, the Janajuddho men opened fire on them. Police fired in return that resulted in an hour-long gunfight.

Trying to escape, Sagar was caught in "crossfire" and died on the spot, police said, adding that two policemen including the officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station was injured.

His body was sent to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

An LG, ten bullets and eight bombs were seized from the spot.

Sagar was accused in 12 different cases including eight for murder, police said.

In Chuadanga, criminals slaughtered a farmer for not paying toll at village Subolpur in Damurdaha upazila.

The victim was identified as Mizanur Rahman alias Pagla Mizan, 38.

The criminals caught Mizan at Raisar Beel (water body) at around 1:00am and slaughtered him after taking to a nearby isolated place, police said.

Earlier the gang threatened to kill Mizan as he declined to pay Tk 5,000 as toll, family sources said.

Police recovered the body and sent to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

2 multi-storey

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Demra (DND) embankment yesterday.

They also removed some 10 thatched and semi-pucca houses from Shyampur canal.

In the face of serious water-logging due to heavy rainfall in June and early July, an inter-ministerial meeting organised by the water resources ministry last month decided to remove illegal structures from the drainage canals in the DND area.

Earlier on Tuesday, some 20 semi-pucca structures at Borobhanga, Boxnagar in Sarulia union were demolished, BWDB Sub-divisional Engineer (DND Irrigation) Sirajul Haq said, adding that the drive will go on as long as the mission is not completed.

Canal excavation is also going on alongside the eviction drive, he said.

Narayanganj district administration and BWDB are also conducting joint drives to free the drainage canals under the district in DND area.

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JRC meeting

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which is now likely to be held next month.

A competent source told the news agency that the deferment was necessary as current session of Indian parliament was extended up to August 31, when the Indian cabinet ministers usually remain busy. The session was earlier supposed to be prorogued on August 26.

"Efforts are underway to hold the JRC meeting early next month," the source said.

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River erosion

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15 points following Indian objections.

"But we can't allow our territories to be devoured by the bordering rivers. We'll take up the issue at the upcoming meeting of Indo-Bangla Joint Rivers Commission (JRC)," the minister said with deep concern.

According to sources in the water resources ministry and JRC, due to Indian objections and occasional exchanges of fire between the BDR and BSF at various points, Bangladesh is now risking losing its bordering lands on the banks of seven out of 54 common rivers with India.

These seven rivers are Mohananda, Atrai, Nagar, Punarbhava, Korotoa, Muhuri and Feni.

The erosion points include Bangladesh and Moinguri in Panchagarh, Poladanga and Gilbari in Chapainawabganj, Borshalopara in Thakurgaon, Mohonpur in Dinajpur, Adatola and Teliapara in Naogaon, Nich Kalikapur in Feni and Thaidong, Laksmichhari, Sonaimuri, Darogapara and Andermanik in Chittagong-Khagrachhari region.

Referring to previous meetings of the JRC, experts pointed out that on numerous occasions both India and Bangladesh had agreed to allow each other do re-vestment work, build embankments on their respective sides to contain erosion of rivers and stabilise their course. But they also agreed that none should go for building spurs and groynes in the cross-boundary rivers that might divert their course adversely affecting the other's territory.

Sources however explained that due to lack of clarity of the critical cross-border river management issues at local levels and due to differences of opinion over exact 'zero lines' at the porous Indo-Bangladesh border, tension prompts the border guards to go for unnecessary exchanges of fire.

Saifur sets deadlines

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growing pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserve, Saifur explained to the secretaries.

Around Tk 247 crore is due from the six city corporations and a number of municipalities in electricity bills, he told the meeting, adding if any ministry fails to pay utility bill in time, it will be adjusted from its block allocation.

Coming out of the meeting Saifur told the press, "If a ministry fails to spend its allocation within the schedule, the money will be relocated to a better performing one."

When asked if the recent country-wide orchestrated bomb blasts may affect the foreign aid, Saifur quipped, "No. Rather the aid will increase."

Bomb explosions are taking place not only in Bangladesh but also across the globe, he said, citing the bombing incidents in London and India as examples. "In India bombs went off inside the parliament building, which has not happened here yet," he noted.

He quoted World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz during his recent visit to Bangladesh as remarking that he was not at all concerned about the bombing, which is the country's internal affair.

The government has reserved Tk 1,651 crore as block allocations for the ministries, each of whom will have to submit to the planning ministry its policy on utilising that fund.

The meeting decided to take action against the officials who would not go by the decisions of the monthly monitoring meetings of the ministries on the progress and status of ADP implementation.

The meeting regretted that as much as Tk 460 crore of the Tk 560 crore Japanese debt relief fund contributed to last fiscal year's ADP had to be carried over to the current fiscal. Such indolence puts undesirable pressure on the budget, it observed, and suggested quick approval and implementation of the projects under the Japanese fund.

Experts call

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assistants and family welfare assistants, who routinely paid door-to-door visits, under one umbrella and ensure their attendance regular. But as these officials opposed the idea to evade accountability, this also contributed to the failure to put the CCs to operation.

Md Azam Ali of NICARE, Bangladesh, said, "It is very much possible to make the CCs functional provided the CCs have local government ownership and are operated in decentralised manner."

He said, "Sitting at the health ministry, one cannot expect a CC to function smoothly...in other words, the CCs cannot be run by trying to centrally control them. The health ministry can always act as catalysts and help functioning of the CCs. As long as the NGOs or CBOs have proven in smooth operation of the CCs, why ignore them?"

Dr Shehina Ahmed, programme director of Water Aid, Bangladesh, said, "Experiences of many in running CCs already show that if we can ensure quality services, even the marginal poor are ready to pay for it. In fact, this clearly tells us that financial sustainability in running CCs is not a big hurdle."

Dr Momena Khatun, health advisor of Canadian International Development Agency, said, "NGO Network for Public Private Partnership experiences also reveal

that client attendance is very high due to the presence of the health assistants and family welfare assistants. A government directive to ensure their regular attendance and supply of the logistics can actually make the CCs functional."

Professor Mahmudur Rahman, coordinator of Dhaka Community Hospital Trust, said, "It is time we recognised the efficiency of the private sector apart from the CBOs and NGOs. And government must also decide where to engage which partners for maximum efficiency in running the CCs."

Hosne Ara Begum, executive director of Thangamara Mahila Sabuj Shingha, said the NGOs reach out to grassroots which is often not possible by the government mechanism. "So, using the experienced NGOs in running the CCs can be an appropriate option," she said.

The speakers also suggested providing guidelines on service specifications, quality standards, monitoring and evaluation, partnership development and the role of NGOs to facilitate the CCs.

They also recommended providing seed money to start the operation of the CCs and regular subsidy to cover the cost of care for the poor.

Mahfuz Anam, editor-publisher of The Daily Star, moderated the roundtable held at The Daily Star conference room.

Cop gets 5yrs

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capital in June this year.

Magistrate Mir Ali Reza of the Speedy Trial Court-6 handed down the sentence in presence of the convict, Julfikar Ali.

The court also fined Julfikar Tk 10,000 and said he will have to be in jail for three months more.

Complainant Azhar Al later said although he will not get back his money, he is satisfied with the judgement.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments, and the court recorded statements of 24 prosecution witnesses.

On June 28, detectives arrested Julfikar, about eight hours after he took away Tk 14.47 lakh from Azhar at Bhojnyagar. The sergeant later said he kept the money with one of his 'sources', who was missing since then.

Azhar, owner of Rajdoot Money Exchange at Motijheel, alleged that the police sergeant intercepted his car when he along with his two nephews was returning to his house at Moneshwar Road in Jigatola at

around 5:00 pm on the day. He snatched a bag containing Tk 5,35,000 and 50,000 Saudi rial and fled the spot, the complainant said.

The businessman filed a case with Paltan Police Station under the Law and Disruption Act. On July 9, DB Inspector Shamsul Islam, also investigation officer of the case, pressed charges against Julfikar.

A d v o c a t e M o h a m m a d Shahjahan appeared for the complainant while advocates M Sajeh Hossain and Montazuddin Mehedi defended the accused.

PM to join

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discuss some "important bilateral matters", including Bangladesh's participation in the UN peacekeeping mission.

The prime minister is expected to leave Dhaka for New York on September 11 to attend the UN General Assembly session and a seminar on global initiative on poverty mooted by former US president Bill Clinton.

Militants claim

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Jamaat activist Montejar, whose residence the militants used as a training camp, however escaped arrest. Police found a list of Jamaat-ICS activists and different Jamaat publications from his house.

Jamaat, however, said it expelled Montejar two years before the incident. But police found from Montejar's diary that he had applied to become a Rukon, a midlevel position in Jamaat.

Police also recovered a letter written by the district Amir of Jamaat to Montejar. Police seized some leaflets, letters and receipts of subscription of the Jihad Fund of the JMB. A significant number of persons who paid subscription to the fund were Jamaat members, local police told the press.

In August 2003, Sohel, a student of Sunamganj Government College was arrested for links with the JMB. His brother Selim made the following statement to the press on August 23: "Shibir [ICS] turned my brother into an ultra-religious man and forced him to work for Jama'atul Mujahideen [JMB]."

Local ICS president Abu Hanif, however, denied the link and said, "He might have worked for us previously but is no more a Shibir worker now."

Other than Jamaat, some leaders of the ruling BNP also supported the militants, specially Bangla Bhai and his group Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMB) in the northern districts. Bangla Bhai himself was an active member of the ICS until 1995.

When Bangla Bhai came into focus for his killings, a state minister, a deputy minister and a BNP lawmaker openly supported him and directed the local police to give Bangla Bhai shelter.

According to a retired intelligence boss, many ICS cadres took part in the Afghan war during the 1980s and on return still maintain a network with different Afghan Mujahideen groups.

Last November, three militants were arrested with 24 powerful gelatin bomb-sticks and 124 electronic detonators in Gaibandha from a Shantahar-bound train. All of them said they are ICS activists although Jamaat disowned them.

Afterward, five JMB activists were arrested while making time bombs at the residence of one Naimuddin Hazi, a Jamaat worker.

On May 23 last year, JMB members marched through Rajshahi town with police escort, in which local Jamaat leaders and activists participated.

After the grenade attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury at Hazrat Shahjalil Shrine in Sylhet on May 21 last year,

Khelifat Majlish Amir Hahbibur Rahman called a press conference to dismiss reports of his link to the incident. Jamaat and Islami Oikya Jote leaders accompanied him to the press conference.

On April 12 last year, when police were preparing to arrest some 80 militants who took shelter in a mosque in Shibganj in Sylhet, city Jamaat Amir Dr Shafiqur Rahman refrained police from the action.

After his arrest in Debiganj in Panchganj on February 23 last year, militant Azizul told police he was previously a member of the ICS and now a worker of the JMB.

Samiul Al Sijur and Fazlul Haq, both JMB militants, admitted after their arrest in Gangachara area in Rangpur on February 23 that they were active workers of the ICS. But the assistant superintendent of police of Rangpur in his probe report on the attack on Brac office said the two are Rukans of Jammat.

On July 19 this year, police arrested 11 suspected Islamist militants including an adherent of Bangla Bhai and two Rajshahi University (RU) students at their training camp at a newly constructed house at Putniapara in Paba upazila. The team leader, Enamul, was an ICS member before he joined the JMB nearly a year ago. The RU students, Golam Mustafa and Ibrahim Hossain, claimed they 'support the ICS'.

On June 1, 2004 Atrai police arrested the second-in-command of Bangla Bhai, Hemayat Hossain Himu, and released him the same night. Himu's brother Belayat Hossain met a state minister at the Circuit House before the release.

On July 2004, three cadres of Bangla Bhai were arrested at a hotel at Iswardi but later released.

OC Azimuddin said, "We released them following a BNP leader's recommendation."

General Secretary of Iswardi unit of BNP Habibur Rahman Tota said, "The arrestees are our men, not cadres of any organisation. I arranged their release following an order of Deputy Minister Ruhul Quddus Talukdar Dulu