

Islamic rebels plotted to attack Delhi shops

Says Indian top cop

AFP, New Delhi

Four Islamic rebels captured after a shootout in the Indian capital planned to blow up busy shopping malls and markets, a senior police official said yesterday.

"Their target was New Delhi," Delhi's joint commissioner of police Karnal Singh told reporters.

"They were planning to target busy markets here... the attacks

were planned for today (Monday)," Singh said.

The rebels, arrested after a 15-minute gunbattle on Sunday, are members of the Jaish-e-Mohammad militant group, one of many battling Indian rule in disputed Kashmir, Singh said.

Three of the men held were Kashmiris while the fourth was identified as Shahid Gaffoor, a resident of Sialkot in Pakistan.

Grenades, four detonators, revolvers, three kilograms (6.6 pounds) of high grade RDX explosive, 10,000 US dollars and 50,000 rupees (1,110 dollars) were recovered from the militants, Singh said.

"The four men were planning to leave immediately after planting the explosives in the markets," Singh said.

In 2005, triple bomb attacks in crowded markets in New Delhi killed 66 people and injured at least 200.

Singh said police received a tip-off that the three Kashmiris would meet a contact about 1.5 kilometres (one mile) from Connaught Place, a commercial and business centre in the capital.

The trio arrived in New Delhi by train from Kashmir earlier on Sunday.

Counter-insurgency officers closed in on the men as they arrived but came under fire from automatic weapons, which resulted in police returning the fire, Singh said.

The Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed is one of two groups blamed for the attack on India's parliament complex in December 2001.

That attack nearly sparked India's fourth war with Pakistan but both sides were pulled back from the brink by diplomatic efforts spearheaded by the United States.

Muslim rebels launched an armed separatist insurgency against New Delhi's rule in Kashmir in 1989.

Hasina visits ailing AL leader Dr Abu Yusuf

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina visited ailing AL leader and former lawmaker Dr Kazi Abu Yusuf at Ibn-Sina Hospital in the city yesterday.

Dr Abu Yusuf, now in his 80s, has long been suffering from respiratory and kidney problems.

Hasina enquired about his treatment and prayed for his early recovery.

AL leaders Matia Chowdhury, Dr Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain accompanied her.



PHOTO: AL

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina visits ailing AL leader and former lawmaker Dr Kazi Abu Yusuf at Ibn-Sina Hospital in the city yesterday.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf visited Tehran yesterday for a day of talks with Iranian leaders focused on his plan to find an Islamic solution to halt violence in the Middle East.

Musharraf met President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and was also to hold talks with supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during the brief visit, before departing in the early evening.

He made no comments to reporters before heading into the meeting with Ahmadinejad.

Pakistan's foreign office has said that Musharraf, who is also due to visit Turkey on this trip, would discuss the Middle East situation, Iraq and other challenges confronting the Muslim world.



PHOTO: STAR

Eight students of Jahangirnagar University (JU) under the banner of 'Jahangirnagar Against Harassment (JAH)' begin fast unto death on the campus yesterday.

8 JU students begin fast unto death

JU CORRESPONDENT

The students of Jahangirnagar University (JU) under the banner of

'Jahangirnagar Against Harassment (JAH)' yesterday began fast unto death to press their three-point demand, including dismissal of the suspended teacher for alleged sexual harassment.

Taking oath to continue the programme until death or the accused teacher is dismissed, eight students of different departments began fast unto death at 2:00pm on Shahid Minar premises where many students and teachers expressed solidarity and support with the pro-gramme.

Prof Anu Mohammad, Prof Shafi Ahmed, Associate Prof Sayeed Ferdous and lecturer Farzana Zebin Khan stressed the necessity of formulating policy against sexual harassment.

Different cultural organisations performed cultural programmes throughout the day.

Prof Akmal Hossain expressed solidarity with the agitators on Sunday while Jhuna Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, and prominent drama personality Mamunur Rashid expressed solidarity yesterday evening.

The JAH is observing the programme, as the authorities have not taken proper step, although the students have been agitating for the last two months, bringing the academic activities to a virtual halt, agitators said.

Though the teacher of Bangla department was suspended on a report by fact-finding committee, the high-powered probe body formed by syndicate seems to be passing time in the name of taking action, agitators alleged.

A female student of Bangla department brought the allegation of sexual harassment against the teacher of the same department in November last year while nine more allegations were also filed against the teacher during the investigation.