

Maldives free Bangladeshi men from bomb probe

AFP, Colombo

Authorities in the Maldives have released four Bangladeshis and a local man arrested following a bomb attack that wounded 12 foreign tourists in the island capital Male, police said Sunday.

"The investigations carried out so far did not reveal that they were involved in this explosion. Eleven suspects are still in police custody," police spokesman Sergeant Ahmed Shiyam told AFP by telephone.

"There are no expatriates among the 11 currently under our custody," Shiyam said, adding that

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Grafts get Lobi 13 years behind bars

Court also fines him Tk 10 lakh, hands his wife 3yrs jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court dealing with graft cases yesterday sentenced former BNP lawmaker Ali Asghar Lobi to 10 years' rigorous and three years' simple imprisonment and fined Tk 10 lakh, in default of which he has to suffer six more months' rigorous imprisonment, in a graft case.

Lobi was one of the most influential leaders of BNP as he had close tie with former premier's son

Tarique Rahman during the immediate past alliance government.

Lobi's wife Khushnud Asghar was also sentenced to three years' simple imprisonment in the same case, as she was found guilty of abetting her husband in acquiring wealth through dishonest means. The court also fined her Tk 1 lakh and in default, she will have to suffer one more month in jail.

The court also directed the government to confiscate their

wealth worth Tk 24.97 crore, which is disproportionate to their known sources of income. Of the total, Tk 22.25 crore is Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDRs) with Premier Bank and Bank Al Falah.

Special Court-3 Judge Shahed Nuruddin delivered the verdict in a packed courtroom set up in the MP Hostel on the national parliament premises.

During delivery of the verdict, SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Garment factory ransacked over death rumour

STAR REPORT

Angry workers ransacked a garment factory near CEPZ yesterday following the rumour of death of a fellow worker allegedly assaulted by factory officials on Friday.

Sources said officials of Bandar Knitting (Pvt) Limited near Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) allegedly assaulted factory worker Mujibur on Friday for having fault in his work. He was sent to a local clinic for treatment.

The incident created resentment among the factory workers. However, they joined work on Saturday after the authorities assured them of providing proper

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Mamun, brother Hafiz amass Tk 171cr in 5yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) investigation found detained businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun, and his detained elder brother also a former lawmaker from Bhola, Hafiz Ibrahim, guilty of illegally amassing an enormous amount of wealth in the last five years.

Mamun is also known as the closest aide to detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

The total amount of wealth amassed by the brothers in the five

years stands at a staggering Tk 171 crore, according to the investigation.

Mamun's earning was Tk 141.74 crore while his brother's was Tk 30.67 crore, and Mamun has a total of 9,000 shares in three industries while the number of bank accounts maintained by the brothers both at home and abroad is close to a hundred.

The brothers are accused of concealing information about their wealth in the statements submitted to the ACC by showing their properties and liquidities under the names of their wives,

daughters, and sons.

The investigation report that revealed the fraud was placed before the commission for getting its approval for turning it into a charge sheet against them.

Mamun used his close relation with the elder son Tarique of now detained former premier Khaleda Zia to ride the gravy train, according to the investigation report.

Hafiz was a BNP lawmaker from Bhola-2 constituency enjoying the privilege of his younger brother's relationship with Tarique, who was also known as 'the prince' among SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

SAUDI FURNITURE FACTORY 7 Bangladeshi workers burned to death

UNB, Dhaka

Seven Bangladeshi workers were burnt to death as a fire broke out at a furniture factory at Garenia on the outskirts of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

Bangladesh Consul office sources in Jeddah said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at noon (local time) and engulfed the entire factory. Fourteen Bangladeshi workers were sleeping inside the factory when fire broke out.

Seven of them managed to come out of the blazing factory breaking its window while the other seven were burned alive, the sources said.

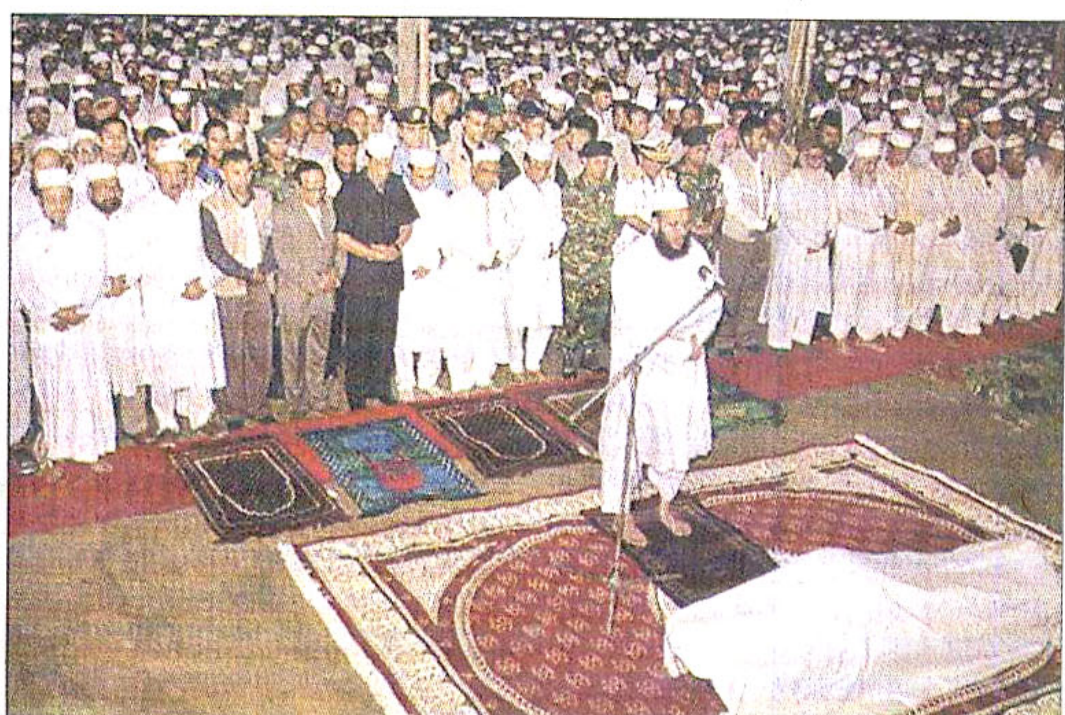
They dead were identified as Jonab Ali, son of Kutub Ullah of Khashipur village and his brother

Ashraf Ali; Chunu Mia, son of Lal Mia of Ashampur village; Shahin, son of Jalal Mia of Garinathpur village; Nurul Islam of Tilak Chandpur; and Manju Mia, son of Rahim Ullah of Khatmasapur village in Balaganj upazila of Sylhet district; and Ali Hossain, son of Haris Ali of Hashgaon village in Moulvibazar district.

On information, firefighters recovered the bodies and sent those to King Abdul Aziz Hospital. Later, the bodies were shifted to Al Mahajah Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Bangladesh's First Secretary (Labour) in Jeddah M Jahangir Alam told UNB that they have sent a letter to the foreign ministry in Dhaka to know the decision of the victims' families whether they

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Namaj-e-Janaza of Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Maulana Obaidul Haq was held at the National Eidgah in Dhaka yesterday.

Khatib Obaidul Haq passes away

STAR REPORT

Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Maulana Obaidul Haq passed away on Saturday night at the city's Labaid Hospital. He was 79.

The Khatib, a former teacher of Dhaka Alia Madrasa, was admitted to the hospital at about 8:30pm after he complained of respiratory problems. He died there at 10:30pm, reports UNB.

He is survived by two wives, four sons, seven daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

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Namaj-e-Janaza for Maulana Obaidul Haq was held at the National Eidgah on the Supreme Court premises at 3:02 pm yesterday. Mufti Maulana Ataul Haq, son of the late Khatib, conducted the namaj-e-janaza.

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GP fined Tk 168cr for illegal VoIP operation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's telecom watchdog has fined Grameenphone Tk168.40 crore for illegal VoIP (voice over internet protocol) business.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Major General (retd) Manzurul Alam yesterday confirmed GP's involvement in the illegal trade.

Talking to The Daily Star, he said, "GP has already paid Tk 56 crore in the first instalment. Rest of the money will be paid within a short time in two instalments."

But GP in a statement yesterday said it has agreed to make a one-time payment to the government as compensation for loss of revenue.

BTRC detected GP's illegal VoIP operation at its Moghbazar office in the capital during a continued

drive against such illegal trade.

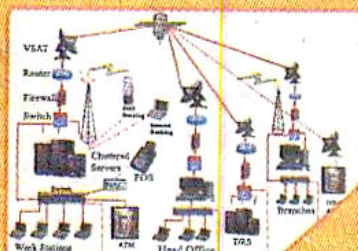
Manzurul said, "Our drive against any illegal activities in the telecommunication sector will continue."

According to BTRC sources, a case against GP was filed on February 12 after the authorities had busted an indoor base station of GP at Moghbazar and found special SIM cards.

BTRC sources said that since January, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has detected several dozen illegal VoIP operations and some of these concern directly or indirectly GP Aitel and Banglalink. Further investigation is going on against other phone companies.

The government has already filed cases against GP, Aitel and Banglalink for illegal VoIP operation, the sources said. BTRC had SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

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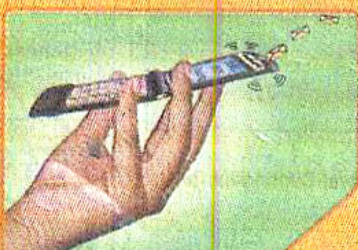
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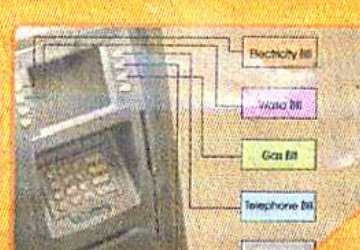
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