

NGO founder's arrest still not made official

UK-based father claims Faisal as detained; 2 cases filed excluding him; another NGO funded setting up of Bhola madrasa

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK with SHARIFUL ISLAM

The law enforcement agencies yesterday denied arresting British citizen Faisal Mostafa, alleged patron of the militants' den busted in Bhola, while his relatives in Dhaka and Manchester claimed he has been detained since Wednesday. "My relatives in Dhaka called me around UK time 7:00am Wednesday (1:00pm local time) and said my son has been detained in Dhaka," Faisal's father Golam Mostafa told The Daily Star last night.

Over phone from Manchester, he also talked about how his son manages funds for his charity Green Crescent that runs the madrasa-cum-orphanage by the same name, where the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) unearthed a mini-munitions factory Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Faisal has not yet been named accused in any of the two cases filed in connection with the recovery of firearms, ammunition and explosives from Green Crescent madrasa.

Golam Mostafa, who visited the Islamic seminary in Ramkeshob village under Borhanuddin upazila in January, claimed it is only an orphanage.

He said his son would send money for the organisation through Manchester branch of state-owned Sonali Bank. The funds would be deposited in two accounts with Doulatkha branch of Sonali Bank.

Badal, Alam and Humayun operate the accounts in Doulatkha.

"Time and again, I've asked my son to

maintain one account," Mostafa said. He said the last time he talked to his son was three days back. Faisal told him he was in Dhaka. "I think he knew nothing about Rab's weapon haul at the orphanage in Bhola."

He found his son's cellphone switched-off when he tried to reach him after learning about his 'arrest'.

Most probably, he continued, the law enforcers have taken away the phone. Mostafa said he has yet to know exactly where and when Faisal was captured.

He said his son was picked up from a relative's house. He claimed he does not know the name and address of the relative, who is an army major.

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Faisal faced terror trials twice in UK

STAR REPORT

British citizen and chief of UK-based NGO Green Crescent Dr Faisal Mostafa, cleared twice of terrorist bomb plot charges in 1996 and 2002 in the UK, had been sentenced to four years' imprisonment for possessing illegal arms and another 56 days in November for trying to board an aircraft with a gun.

According to reports of BBC, British media and various websites, the 44-year-old chemistry graduate was arrested in 1996 and tried for conspiring to cause explosions after chemicals, timers and detonators were discovered in his house.



He got acquitted of the charge claiming that he was writing a book on explosives. But he was found guilty of possessing an illegal firearm and sentenced to four years' imprisonment and also banned for life from possessing a firearm.

In 2000, he was arrested again and charged with planning to cause explosions after police discovered a large cache of explosives at a house in Birmingham. In 2002, he was cleared of the charge but his co-defendant was convicted of the offence and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment.

Faisal told the British court that he has

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Dhaka gets into holiday mood

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A soothing atmosphere now prevails at capital city Dhaka, as it is now free of chaos and traffic jam to a large extent.

Crowds hovering at the shopping malls and roads are thinner now and there is no ear piercing sound from bus, truck and other vehicles, thanks to three days holiday.

The number of inhabitants in the capital Dhaka became thin on the occasion of the independence and national day and two weekly holidays.

People who stay at Dhaka on job purpose left to meet their near and dear ones outside Dhaka on three days

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PHOTO: STAR

The National Memorial at Savar is bathed in floral tributes as the nation paid homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War yesterday marking the 39th Independence Day of the country.

39TH INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATED Fresh vow for trial of war criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation yesterday celebrated its 39th Independence Day paying glowing tributes to the Liberation War martyrs and calling on the government to hold the trial of war criminals.

The resurgence of the spirit of the Liberation War was marked among the people as hundreds of thousands belonging to different generations stood before war memorials across the country and vowed to bring the war criminals to book.

This year the Independence Day was celebrated at a time when the much-awaited trial of

war criminals has been initiated by the new government.

Security measures have been beefed up in the city with the deployment of over ten thousand law enforcers in the capital to avert any untoward incidents. The ceremonious national parade, held at the National Parade Square every year, was cancelled this year following the BDR mutiny, which left many army officers dead.

On this day in 1971, the unarmed valiant Bangalees of the then East Pakistan rose to the occasion to resist the Pakistani occupation

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Bench to settle bail dilemma for fugitives

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin has constituted a one-member High Court (HC) bench to settle the question whether a person sentenced in absentia can seek bail from the HC without surrendering to the trial court.

His decision, which came on March 17, follows the HC's split verdict on the issue last month.

Responding to bail prayers by 12 convicted people, the presiding judge of an HC bench, Syed AB Mahmudul Huq, directed the petitioners to surrender to the trial courts within eight weeks and then seek bail from the HC.

During the time, he said, the petitioners cannot be arrested or harassed.

But the other judge, Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, ordered the 12 to surrender to the trial courts immediately to serve the sentences already handed down on them.

Former minister and Jatiya Party leader Anwar Hossain Manju and former BNP law-

maker Nadim Mostafa were among the petitioners.

The bench on March 17 sent the petitions of Manju and Mostafa to the chief justice for a decision.

The bench formed by the CJ will soon fix a date for hearing the petitions.

Additional Attorney General M Enayetur Rahim yesterday told The Daily Star that the third bench will give the final decision whether those sentenced in absentia can seek bail from the HC without surrendering to the trial courts.

Criminal law expert Khan Saifur Rahman said the CJ-formed bench would agree on any of the decisions given by the two HC judges earlier.

While at least 15 people sentenced in absentia have got split orders from the HC, 15 others have either obtained bail or court directions for the law enforcers not to harass or arrest them in connection with the cases against them.

Those granted bail or shielded from arrest

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Militancy invented Claims Nizami

UNB, Dhaka

Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Matiur Rahman Nizami yesterday said militancy has been invented to impede development of Bangladesh keeping the frontier unprotected.

Addressing a meeting marking the Independence Day at Al Falah building, he said Awami League (AL) knows well that those involved in Islamic movement cannot have link with any acts of sabotage.

Nizami noted that after the independence Rakkhi Bahini formed by AL did not feel the urgency of launching operation against the then leaders of the Islamic movement, rather they carried out operation against the leftists and JSD leaders who deserted the AL.

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Vital gas supply project trimmed for fund crisis

SHARIER KHAN

As fund constraint stalls a vital donor-funded \$189-million project to install three gas pipelines and compressors necessary to increase the country's gas supply, the energy ministry on Tuesday decided to reduce the number of pipelines and compressors down to two.

At a meeting chaired by Energy Adviser Dr Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, it was also decided to invite the project's donor Asian Development Bank (ADB) next week to review reconfiguration of the project.

"The idea of this rearrangement is to have the best gas pipeline and compressor solution within this available fund of \$189 million," says an official.

"If we just go for all pipelines and no compressor, gas will not flow to users at a desired pressure or quantity. We also

cannot ignore the pipelines as well. We need them all. Reconfiguration will give us some time to get new funds for the remaining parts of project," he adds.

The ADB offered a \$235-million loan to the government in 2006 for gas infrastructure and training. Of this fund, \$189 million was given to the Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL) for the three compressors and pipelines.

Keeping around \$14 million as contingency budget from the \$189 million fund, GTCL held separate tenders for the pipeline and compressor projects.

The three pipeline projects are Monohardi-Elenga 30-inch 51km pipeline to transmit gas to Siraganj and up to Khulna; Jamuna West-Nalka-Bheramara 30-inch 98km; and Bheramara to Khulna 20-inch 162km pipeline. The three compressor stations need to be set up in Muchai, Ashuganj and Elenga.

A compressor is necessary to maintain gas flow pressure and volume to a desired level. When gas flows from one point to another through a pipeline its pressure and volume at the other end drop. If there are too many consumers connected to the pipeline, this drop can be so significant that power plants or even domestic connections can bog down temporarily causing serious problems.

The GTCL at the Tuesday's meeting pointed out that due to excessive demand, gas pressure was unacceptably dropping in the 24-hour cycle every day in important locations like Chittagong, Demra, Siddhirganj, Rupganj, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Mymensingh, Baghabari and elsewhere. Power stations, fertiliser plants and industrial units are being regularly affected for this.

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2 hurt in explosion Bomb found at Independence Day celebration venue

STAR REPORT

Two people, including upazila unit Awami League (AL) vice-president, were wounded as a bomb blasted in the AL leader's house at Laxmipur village in Muladi upazila of the district yesterday.

Sukumar Roy, officer-in-charge of the police station, said the bomb exploded when AL leader Ruhul Amin Khan was talking to Anwar Hossain, headmaster of No. 77 Chilmari Government Primary School, in his guest room at about 11:45 am, leaving them wounded.

Police said the roof of the room was also blown up in the explosion.

Ruhul Amin told the local newsmen that two females in burka came to him with a request for issuing VGF cards in favour of them but he refused it. Soon after the females left his house, the bomb exploded.

Our Patuakhali correspondent adds: A bomb was found

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The Daily Star disclaimer

These stunning pictures claimed to be of the first few minutes of the BDR carnage are available on the Facebook. The Daily Star could not confirm the authenticity of the photos. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) department of the defence forces was also not aware of such pictures. However, The Daily Star chose to carry the pictures in view of their significance. The captions are also based on information from the Facebook.



Senior army officers tend to the two armed men, both of whom failed to fire their guns and fainted, on the stage inside the Darbar Hall. The JCO (extreme R) is seen rushing out to call in other armed groups. SEE MORE PICTURES ON PAGE 7 documenting the first moments of the BDR mutiny.

Social unrest looms large in Asia-Pacific Warns UN survey amid financial crisis

AFP, Bangkok

Asia and the Pacific face a "marked risk" of social unrest as the global financial crisis bites, but the region continues to lead international prospects for recovery, a UN survey said Thursday.

The annual survey said that the region faces multiple layers of crisis ranging from financial breakdown, food and fuel price instability and climate change that could have wide-ranging effects this year.

There was "fresh evidence mounting that the worst has yet to come," with a big slump in trade, the region's engine of growth, according to the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2009.

"There is a marked risk that the financial crisis could converge on itself in a downward spiral of deepening recession, social unrest and political instability," said the survey.

A key trigger for unrest was that millions of Asian migrants are returning to their rural homes in search of work after losing jobs in the crisis-hit export sector, UN Undersecretary General Noeleen Heyzer said.

"Asia-Pacific is under multiple threats and the gains that have been made in terms of development can be lost very easily," Heyzer told AFP in an interview ahead of the report's launch in Bangkok.

Investment in job security and social safety nets for the poor must be sought urgently, she said, adding: "If we do not address the growing disparities we are going to find it's going to create social unrest."

The survey estimated some 24 million people could lose their jobs as a result of the economic slowdown. It added that only 30

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4 killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people, including a vice president of Awami Swechchasebok League's Dhaka city unit and a Juba League member, were killed in separate incidents in different parts of the capital yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Sohel Ahmed, 42, city unit VP of Swechchasebok League, Dulal Hossain, 30, Juba League member of ward No. 37, Arif Hossain, 22, an employee of a fast food shop in Badda and Rezia Begum, 45, a sex-worker of Gulistan area.

Kotwali police recovered the bullet-hit body of Sohel Ahmed from Bagdasha Lane in Kotwali area around 3:00am and sent it to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Locals said a gang of 10-12 armed criminals stabbed him and shot him in his back, leaving him dead on the spot.

Police said Sohel, known as a drug peddler in the area, was accused in several cases with the police station.

In another incident, unidentified criminals shot Juba League member Dulal at

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