

PLAN TO ATTACK US, INDIAN MISSIONS

3 Pakistanis with 'Lashkar link' held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of police arrested three Pakistanis with suspected links to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Tongi and the city's Uttara early yesterday.

Later in the day, a Dhaka court placed them on a two-day remand each, allowing the detectives to quiz the two over the reported LeT plans to attack the US and Indian embassies in Dhaka.

The arrestees are Syed Abdul Kaiyum Azhari alias Sufian, 22, Mohammad Ashraf Alia Zahid, 24, and Mohammad Monwar Ali, 30.

Talking to The Daily Star, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque said, "We know a good number of Lashkar operatives are on a covert campaign to carry out subversive activities in Bangladesh. We however have no figure of how many of them are here."

He said of the arrestees, Sufian, a mechanical engineering graduate from Islamic Institute of Technology in Gazipur, had been organising LeT cadres on instructions from his bosses in Pakistan.

"He used to recruit youths for Lashkar and arrange training for them in different countries," Shahidul added.

The other two--diploma engineers--

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Three Pakistani nationals, held early yesterday for suspected link with a plot to attack the US embassy and Indian high commission in Dhaka, are taken on a two-day remand in the afternoon. PHOTO: STAR

BANGABANDHU CASE People will accept verdict, says Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said people will accept the upcoming verdict in Bangabandhu murder case.

"People of the country will certainly accept the final verdict of Supreme Court against the real killers of Bangabandhu," he said at a function.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of BNP, organised the function at Ramna in the city marking the 45th birth anniversary of BNP senior joint secretary general Tarique Rahman.

Delwar, however, came down heavily on the recent remarks of Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and government's counsels saying they

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BHAIRAB DIST ROW Kishoreganj blockade begins

UNB, Bhairab

A nonstop Kishoreganj blockade programme enforced by people in Bhairab and Kuliarchar upazilas began yesterday demanding that Bhairab and Kuliarchar upazilas be upgraded into a full-fledged district.

Bhairab District Implementation Committee and All Party Action Council also enforced the programme

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Costly fuel import to cost BPC extra Tk 50cr

Ignoring cheaper offer, it chooses Malaysian oil

SHARIEF KHAN

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) is once again buying the major part of the country's oil needs at a very high premium rate from Malaysia, making an extra cost of around Tk 50 crore which still can be avoided, sources say.

The BPC in recent years purchased petroleum products from several countries to meet the country's petroleum needs of 3.5 million tonnes. In the past the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) had been the main supplier of BPC till it started charging high premium when the oil price skyrocketed and BPC started delaying payments.

To meet the country's oil demands for 2010, BPC in mid-September signed an agreement with the Petronas Trading Corporation (Petco) of Malaysia.

Petco will supply one million tonnes of gas oil or diesel by charging BPC a premium of \$4.7

per barrel, around 150,000 tonnes of jet fuel and kerosene at \$6.25 per barrel premium, and 100,000 tonnes of motor fuel at \$8.5 premium per barrel.

But BPC on October 29 made another deal with KPC to supply 7.1 lakh tonnes of gas oil or diesel at \$3.9 a barrel premium and 130,000 tonnes of jet fuel-kerosene at \$4.9 a barrel.

This deal shows a significant difference of costs. A source explains by purchasing diesel from Petco at higher premium, BPC is spending \$5.2 million or Tk 36 crore extra.

Similarly, the jet fuel deal is also \$1.4 million or Tk 11 crore costlier than the KPC deal.

The KPC is not the only supplier offering lower premium rates. The Philippines National Oil Company (PNOC) and Egyptian national oil company Midor are also offering only \$3.9 premium for supply of 60,000 tonnes of diesel each for January to June next year.

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BNP plans major changes in party constitution

Chairperson to have more power, central body to expand

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP is planning to bring massive changes to the party constitution bolstering the chairperson's authority, in light of its experience during the immediate past emergency regime when it almost split.

The amendment proposals also include one for electing the secretary general through the national council, and another for expansion of the central executive committee.

The party's constitution and declaration amendment sub-committee that had been formed as a part of the preparations for the national council scheduled for December 8, came up with the proposals, after collecting reform proposals from workers and leaders of all levels.

Now the streamlined proposals will be submitted to the chairperson for discussion in the standing committee which will finalise those for submission to the national council.

Committee sources said both the chairperson and secretary general will be elected by the councillors and both of them will have three-year tenure, if the new provisions are accepted.

Permission of immediate supervisory committees will become mandatory for all units to use portraits of party founder also late president Ziaur Rahman, Chairperson Khaleida Zia, and their son Tarique Rahman in posters or leaflets.

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Indian foreign secretary due today

REZAUL KARIM

Ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India, New Delhi is sending its Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao in advance to Dhaka for preparing the ground for the tour as well as finalise issues to be tabled for discussion between the premiers of Bangladesh and India.

Rao is due to arrive here this morning on a 2-day official visit to hold talks with her Bangladesh counterpart

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Bomber attacks ISI regional HQ: 10 die

Another suicide bombing in north-western Pakistan city kills 8

AFP, Peshawar

A powerful suicide car bomb ripped through the Peshawar headquarters of Pakistan's top spy agency yesterday, killing at least 10 people and leaving much of the fortified building in ruins.

A similar bombing killed eight people in another northwest town, the latest in a spate of attacks as 30,000 troops press their most ambitious assault yet against Taliban militants in their mountain strongholds on the Afghan border.

The attack devastated the three-storey Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) provincial headquarters in the northwestern city of Peshawar, sending huge clouds of smoke spewing into the sky and destroying more than half of the building.

The bomber, driving a mini-truck loaded with explosives, raced down the road towards the ISI building shortly before sunrise, provincial information minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain said.

Soldiers opened fire after they spotted the truck, but the bomber ploughed into a steel barrier and blew up the vehicle outside the main gate of the ISI compound, wreaking massive destruction, he added.

More than half of the U-shaped building was destroyed by the force of the blast which devastated its outer wall, a front portion and a col-

umn, and scattered bodies among the rubble, an AFP reporter said.

Peshawar, on the edge of Pakistan's lawless tribal belt infested with al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters, has increasingly become the favoured target for major attacks by suspected Taliban militants in recent months, particularly since the army launched its massive offensive in October.

Absar Ahmed, a 25-year-old taxi driver, said he was driving near the ISI building when he heard gunshots followed by a huge blast.

"My car was hurled on to the pavement by the force of the blast and my head banged into the windscreen. When I looked back to check on my passenger there was smoke all over," Ahmed told AFP in hospital.

The attacks coincided with a visit by US National Security Advisor James Jones who held talks with Pakistan's army chief, General Ashfaq Kayani.

The United States has put Pakistan on the frontline of its war against al-Qaeda and has been increasingly disturbed by deteriorating security in the country where attacks and bombings have killed about 2,500 people in 28 months.

Pakistan's powerful and shadowy intelligence agencies have a history of supporting the Islamist groups in a bid to counter rival India,

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Babar sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained former BNP state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar was sent to Dhaka central jail yesterday after 12 days' remand in the August 21 grenade attack case.

Investigation Officer of the case Abdul Kahar Akand produced Babar before the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on expiry of the former minister's remand in the third phase.

Babar gave vital information about the grenade attack,

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