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## Jaish-e-Mohammed operative captured

4 local aides to Pakistani militant held in Rab raid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion arrested a Pakistani national and four locals for suspected links to Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in the city early yesterday.

The Pakistani, Rezwana Ahmed, 26, had been coordinating JeM operations in Bangladesh, said Rab officials.

The other arrestees—Nannu Mian alias Belal Mandol alias Billal, 35, Abu Naser Munshi, 28, Imad Uddin alias Munna, 18, and Sadeque Hossain alias Khoka, 19—are his local associates.

Of the five, Billal was arrested near the foot-bridge in front of New Market and the rest including Rezwana were rounded up in Sukanya Tower, an apartment block adjacent to Gausia Market on Mirpur Road.

Billal had been jailed in India for involvement in hijacking an Indian Airlines plane in December 1999.

After serving out 10 years in Guwahati prison, he recently fled back home.

This is the first time that law enforcers here have captured suspected members of JeM, one of the major terrorist outfits operative in South Asia.

In a pre-dawn raid on a flat in the Sukanya Tower, the crime busters also seized three passports, two of them issued in Pakistan, one knife, one CPU, four national ID cards, five mobile phones and 2,000 Indian rupees.

The passports belong to Rezwana, Billal and another Pakistani named Jawad.

Rab sources said Jawad might have fled to India.

In primary interrogation, Rezwana said

he had been trained to operate AK-47, machine guns, sniper rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and explosive devices.

He said his assignment here was to recruit local youths and prepare them to stage attacks in India.

Rezwana and his co-arrestees were paraded before the media at the Rab headquarters in Uttara yesterday afternoon.

Talking to reporters, the Pakistani said he is from Delhi Colony Clifftop in Karachi.

Col SM Matiur Rahman, Rab's additional director general, said Munna and Khoka—two of the locals detained—are sons of Mohiuddin Mian.

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PHOTO ON PAGE 15



A woman sits helplessly amidst the debris of a fire that broke out Saturday evening at a camp of stranded Pakistanis in the capital's Mirpur. The blaze burnt down at least 65 shanties and 12 shops. Story on page 16. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Govt should step down for 'failure'

Says Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Saturday said the present Awami League-led government should step down admitting its failure in running the country.

"The country is not functioning and all institutions have become inoperative. If the government can't run the country properly, it should quit the power right now," she said.

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## Step up Khaleda's security measures

PM directs home ministry; rejects demand for recruiting party men in govt services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the home ministry to step up security measures for Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The directive came at Saturday's meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC), highest decision-making body of ruling Awami League, with party chief Hasina

in the chair.

But there would be no Special Security Force (SSF) escort for Khaleda as demanded by BNP last week, meeting sources say.

A number of AL central leaders blasted several ministers in presence of Hasina for what they said was not recruiting pro-AL unemployed youths in the public service despite their qualification.

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## CHT VIOLENCE Dhaka terms EU claims baseless

STAR REPORT

The government on Saturday outright rejected the observation of the European Union in a statement issued on recent incidents of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Terming the observation of the EU as baseless and unfounded, a release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said such statement would not help the process of

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## TANNERY RELOCATION TO SAVAR Govt, owners get 6 months

HC bans waste dumping at Amin Bazar for 2 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday extended for six months the deadline for relocation of environmentally hazardous tanneries from the capital's Hazaribagh.

The court in another order directed the Dhaka City Corporation authorities and the project director not to dump wastes for two months at Amin Bazar in Savar.

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## STRIKE AT DMCH Operation theatre shut for 4 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-hour long strike since 9:00am at the operation theatre, called by the anaesthetists of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, caused severe sufferings to the patients as at least 10 emergency and scheduled operations were not conducted during that time.

The anaesthetists went for strike after a doctor of surgery department Dr Rana with his

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## Faulty probe leads to impunity for KTS directors

EMRAN HOSSAIN and DAVID BERGMAN

Two garment company directors escaped charges of culpable homicide after at least 54 workers died in a fire in their Chittagong factory in February 2006 despite admitting to a magistrate their role in keeping the exit gates locked.

The police charge sheet relating to the fire at KTS Textiles and Garments did not mention the admissions made in court by the company's chairman, Towhidul Islam Chowdhury, and its maintenance director, Wahidul Islam Chowdhury. Instead, extraordinarily, the charge sheet proposed that the charges against the two men should be dismissed "for lack of evidence".

The Daily Star can also reveal that although the police recommended that 14 other men, including two other directors, the production director and the factory manager, should be charged with homicide, the investigation itself was so superficial that the High Court quashed all proceedings against them. It ruled that the charge sheet had made no "specific allegation" against the men.

The admissions were made in a magistrate court hearing two months after the fire involving offences under the



Factories Act where two directors and the factory manager were fined a total of Tk 4,500--the only penalty imposed following one of Bangladesh's worst industrial fires.

Arina Group, of which the KTS factory is a part, also owns three other garment businesses in Chittagong. The company authorities told The Daily Star that they are "finding it difficult to meet the demand for orders" and are now taking steps to reopen their fire-gutted factory.

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## Paban 'behind' cracker blast

Admits his friend upon arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Hamid Paban, son of BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, hired two young men to explode crackers in front of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office on February 23, revealed Paban's friend arrested in connection with the blasts.

Detective police arrested Golam Sabbir alias Shovon on Saturday night from his Kalabagan residence, and seized his red car that had fled the blast scene right after the incident. Police also seized Paban's car from the same place.

Earlier, police arrested Pradip Saha, secretary of Sonaimuri upazila BNP backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), right after the blasts, from an alley next to the scene while he was speeding away on a motorbike, said police detectives.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque, at a media briefing yesterday, said, "Both Pradip and Shovon confessed that Paban had hired two other young men to carry out a mock bomb attack on himself, in an effort to draw

## SALARY HIKE DEMAND RMG factory vandalised in Gazipur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of unruly workers yesterday damaged a composite garment factory of Islam Group at Konabari in Gazipur demanding a hike in salary and other facilities, said police.

Abdur Rashid, officer-in-charge of Joydevpur Police Station, told The Daily Star that although the issue of salary hike was almost settled through a discussion between the management and workers on Saturday, some unruly workers vandalised the factory.

"Nobody was injured in the incident. We have arrested a garment worker and the

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## WEALTH HIDING CASE Convicted HBM Iqbal lands in jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent former Awami League lawmaker HBM Iqbal to jail after he had surrendered to the court to seek bail in a case on charges of concealing wealth information.

Earlier, Iqbal was sentenced to 13 years in jail in the

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