

Al-Qaeda-Pak troops clash leaves 13 dead

AFP, Angoor Adda

Pakistani troops killed 12 al-Qaeda suspects and captured 12 militants in a dramatic siege Thursday involving helicopter gunships and ground forces in this remote northwestern area on the Afghan border.

One Pakistani soldier was killed and two injured in the day-long gun battle, military spokesman Shaukat Sultan said.

The captured included four suspected al-Qaeda fighters, six suspected Taliban supporters and two others, army officers said.

The operation, launched after attacks on troops in Afghanistan's adjacent Paktika province, began with a dawn siege of an al-Qaeda hideout five km from the border at Angoor Adda in South Waziristan.

Journalists taken by the Pakistani army to the scene as fighting raged were shown four dead bodies covered in shrouds, 10 prisoners and a massive cache of anti-tank mines, grenades, rockets and machine guns seized from the hideout.

Another eight bodies were lying in the field and had yet to be recovered, said special forces Major General Faizal Alavi, the commander of the operation.

Four of the prisoners -- blindfolded, stripped to the waist and sporting long, dark beards -- were foreign al-Qaeda suspects with Central Asian features, Alavi said.

The other six, dressed in traditional local outfits and caps, were suspected Taliban, he said. Some had long, white beards.

Two more militants were captured later, officials said, without identifying them.

As Alavi spoke at the edge of the operation, Cobra gunships fired missiles at al-Qaeda suspects hiding in gullies and trees, grenades exploded and gunfire crackled.

An unknown number of al-Qaeda suspects had been hiding out in five mud-walled compounds, each made up of several houses.

Pakistani forces, having confirmed Wednesday the compounds were an al-Qaeda hideout, surrounded the buildings Thursday and

ordered the militants to surrender. Women and children ran out of one house, but Alavi said they had nothing to do with the al-Qaeda group and their home was separate from the others.

The besieged al-Qaeda suspects refused to surrender and instead fought back with grenades and gunfire, Alavi said.

Pakistan launched the operation after a series of attacks on US and Afghan troops in Paktika blamed on resurgent members of Afghanistan's hardline Islamic Taliban regime, ousted in late 2001, and its al-Qaeda allies.

South Waziristan is facing the Afghan region of Shkin, home of the most attacked US base in Afghanistan, and dubbed last week by the US military spokesman Rodney Davis as "the most evil place in Afghanistan."

Major General Shaukat Sultan told AFP the operation was "against

2 primary sites picked for Padma Bridge

BSS, Dhaka

Mawa-Janjira and Paturia-Goalundo sites have been primarily found 'more feasible' than two other sites for construction of the proposed Padma Bridge.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), which is conducting a feasibility study, in its first progress report said yesterday Mawa-Janjira and Paturia-Goalundo sites should be preferred to Dohar-Charbhadrasan and Chandpur-Bhedarganj sites to build the bridge over the Padma.

The report put the length of the proposed bridge both at Mawa and Paturia sites at around 6.1 kilometres with 80 and 90 metre guide bunds respectively.

When the Padma Bridge is constructed, the 4.75-km-long Jamuna Bridge will be the second longest bridge in the country.

Team leader of the feasibility study Minoru Shibuya presented the report to Communications Minister Nazmul Huda at a function at the Shetu Bhaban.

The team however said it would carry out further studies to pick one from the two primarily selected two



PHOTO: STAR

Increasing popularity of bonsai is reflected in the exhibition organised by Bangladesh Bonsai Society at BRAC Centre in Dhaka yesterday. Enthusiasts young and old are getting attracted to the quintessentially Japanese artistry of growing miniature trees.



PHOTO: STAR

Children selling candy on Dhaka streets pose for a photograph at the National Shishu Academy premises. Programmes commemorating the Child Rights Week ended yesterday, but there is hardly any change to the lives of these children.

Two to die for killing driver

IGP asked to take action against IO for poor investigation

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A court in Dhaka yesterday sentenced two to death for killing an auto-rickshaw driver in September 2000.

The Court of the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge, Dhaka handed down the verdict, but acquitted six of the charges.

The death convicts are Kuna Ripon and Mohammad Jahangir while the acquitted are Anwar Hossain, Kabi, Sonu Miah, Rubel, Sohail and Mintu.

The convicts can appeal with the higher court against the verdict within seven days.

The court further directed the inspector general of police (IGP) to take necessary steps against Sub-inspector (SI) Abdul Kuddus Fakir,

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Iraq draft resolution sees no pivotal UN role

Plan stresses US firm control

REUTERS, United Nations

Trying to win over skeptics, the Bush administration revised a UN resolution that emphasises an eventual transfer of power to Iraqis but still leaves the US-led coalition in firm control.

The new draft, obtained by Reuters on Wednesday, gives the United Nations a list of duties, similar to earlier versions. But it falls short of demands by France, Russia, Germany and others that the world body play a pivotal, independent role in overseeing the country's transition.

Diplomats expect considerable suggestions for changes before the measure is adopted by the 15-

member Security Council. At minimum, they say, the draft should set a date for when a plan leading to Iraqi sovereignty could be submitted.

The main purpose of the new resolution, as before, is to transform the military operation into a UN-authorised multinational force under American command.

This provision is aimed at attracting more contributions from nations wary of sending soldiers as part of an occupation force, although volunteers appear to be scarce.

The 25-member Iraqi Governing Council, appointed by the United States, would provide a timetable and program for drafting a new constitution and for elections, in cooperation with the occupation

authorities and the United Nations.

The United Nations would help, if asked by Iraqi leaders, to establish an electoral process along with "advancing efforts to restore and establish national and local institutions for representative government," the draft says.

To meet some objections, the text speaks of the "temporary nature" of the US-led occupation "until an internationally recognised, representative government is established."

It says that the administration of Iraq will be "progressively undertaken by the evolving structures of the Iraqi interim administration."

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Abducted Arifa to return home from Kolkata today

BSS, Dhaka

Baby girl Arifa, abducted and smuggled to India nearly a month ago, is expected to return home today after the Indian authorities handed over the breast-fed two-year-old yesterday to Bangladesh mission in Kolkata in line with a court order.

"We have received her at around 2 o'clock in the afternoon from Indian police at the mission office. She is expected to reach Dhaka by air by 12:00pm tomorrow," Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh Mission in Kolkata Touhid Hossain said by telephone.

He added that the mission issued a "travel permit" for her return and forwarded it for Indian immigration clearance expected to be available later yesterday.

Touhid said despite the Durga Puja holiday, the immigration authorities in Kolkata kept their office open for issuing an "exit permit" for Arifa.

The deputy high commissioner said the tiny tot was staying with Bangladesh Women Lawyers Association (BWLA) President Advocate Salma Ali, who is now in Kolkata to take the baby back home with the authorisation from her parents in Kurigram.

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Cop threat to woman partly stripped during hartal alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami Mahila League yesterday alleged that police and intelligence agencies are harassing one of its members who was partly stripped by policewomen during the last hartal.

The law enforcers visited the residence of Nasima Ferdousi, vice-president of Dhaka city's north unit of the Mahila League, who was assaulted by police during the hartal on September 27, and warned her not to come public with the facts, they said.

The Mahila League, women front of the main opposition Awami League, held a press conference at the Bangabandhu Avenue office of the party to protest the attack.

Police also visited the residence of another Mahila League leader, Nazma Hossain Baby, who wit

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3 US troops die as violence rages in Iraq

AFP, Baghdad

Three US troops were killed in a span of hours as the Americans pressed their drive to root out the Iraqi resistance to their nearly six-month-old occupation, taking the toll from attacks to 88 in five months.

One soldier was killed late Wednesday in a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attack in Samarra 100 km north of Baghdad, at the same time as another was struck down by small arms fire in the capital.

The pair of attacks came just four hours after a bomb claimed the life of a soldier in Tikrit, the hometown of ousted strongman Saddam Hussein.

"A 4th Infantry Division soldier died of wounds he received in an RPG attack on his convoy which

was travelling by Samarra," at nine pm (1700 GMT), a military spokesman said.

The infantryman was evacuated from Samarra to a field hospital where he later died, the spokesman added.

It was the 88th death of a soldier in combat here since US President George W. Bush declared hostilities over on May 1.

As the convoy was being ambushed in Samarra, unknown assailants shot dead a US soldier and wounded another in the capital.

The two members of the 1st Armored Division, were shot with a small-calibre handgun also at nine pm while on patrol in the posh Al Mansur neighbourhood in Baghdad, the US military's Central

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2 Bangladeshis held in US for claiming false citizenship

UNB, Dhaka

Two Bangladeshis were arrested at Dallas in the US on September 25 for falsely claiming US citizenship in loan application.

The Dallas Business Journal reported that Mohammad Rafiqul Khan and Mehjabin Lubna applied for Small Business Administration-backed loan on May 14, 1999.

According to documents placed before the US District Court in Fort Worth, Dallas, an agent of Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement Group Ronald Joe Brookshire said Khan applied for a \$1.17 million loan. Lubna also applied for the same loan, Brookshire said.

Khan entered the US in 1992 while Lubna migrated in 1997 with student visa but they never attended school and stayed in the US, Brookshire added.

However, no trial date has been set.

AFP, Seoul

North Korea raised the stakes in the nuclear standoff yesterday, claiming it had produced enough weapons-grade plutonium for half-a-dozen atomic bombs and suggesting it was already building new weapons.

The statement also indicated North Korea would pull out of six-way talks aimed at ending the year-long impasse and complained that Washington has failed to meet its demand for a non-aggression pact.

A North Korea foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement the

reprocessed fuel was already being used to build more nuclear bombs.

It said that after reprocessing, North Korea "made a switchover in the use of plutonium churned out by reprocessing spent fuel rods in the direction increasing its nuclear deterrent force."

"We will reprocess more spent fuel rods to be churned out in an unbroken chain from the five megawatt nuclear reactor in Nyongbyon (Yongbyon) without delay when we deem it necessary."

The United States believes North

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 03		5-44 pm
Oct 04	5-51 am	

Prayer Timings		
October 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-25
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-50	5-55
Shafa	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

Maintain tradition of religious harmony

Khaleda urges all on Durga Puja

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged all to maintain the religious harmony in order to keep the country's traditional image intact both at home and abroad.

"Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony...here people of all religions live together peacefully," she told a 17-member delegation of Hindu Religious Welfare Trust when they made a courtesy

call at her office on the occasion of Durga puja.

"We have to maintain the tradition so that members of all religious communities can perform their religious rites properly," she added.

Extending her best wishes, the prime minister expressed the hope that this year also the devotees would observe the greatest Hindu festival in a joyous mood and with religious fervour.

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