

Taliban killed, injured over 400 Afghan forces in one week: gov’t

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

The Taliban has killed or wounded more than 400 Afghan security personnel over the past week, the interior ministry said, accusing the group of increasing attacks in the run-up to expected peace talks.

Violence dropped across much of Afghanistan since the Taliban announced a three-day ceasefire on May 24 to mark the Muslim Eid al-Fitr celebration, but officials have accused the group of stepping up attacks in recent days.

“In the past one week, the Taliban carried out 222 attacks against the Afghan security forces, resulting in the death and injury of 422” personnel, interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said at a news conference yesterday.

He also accused the Taliban of targeting religious scholars in a bid to put “psychological pressure” on the Afghan government.

Bomb attacks on Kabul mosques that killed two prayer leaders this month were the work of the Taliban, Arian claimed.

“This has been the goal of the Taliban to target religious scholars, especially in the past two weeks,” he said, accusing the armed fighters of being an “umbrella group for other terrorist networks”.

Four people, including a prayer leader, were killed when a blast ripped through a mosque in Kabul during weekly Friday prayers.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack which came just over a week after an ISIL (or ISIS) attack at a mosque on the edge of Kabul’s heavily fortified Green Zone killed a prominent prayer leader.

The Taliban condemned both attacks.

After initially reporting a drop in overall violence following the ceasefire, National Security Council spokesman Javid Faisal yesterday said the Taliban “have not reduced, but rather increased their attacks across the country”.

Another killing

FROM PAGE 1

Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said she had accepted the prompt resignation of police chief Shields.

“I do not believe that this was a justified use of deadly force and have called for the immediate termination of the officer,” Bottoms said at an afternoon news conference.

Brooks was the father of a young daughter who was celebrating her birthday on Saturday, his lawyers said.

Near the scene of the shooting, street protests began on Saturday, with more than 100 people calling for the officers to be charged criminally in the case.

PARKING LOT

Friday’s shooting came after police were called to the Wendy’s over reports that Brooks had fallen asleep in the drive-thru line. Officers attempted to take him into custody after he failed a field sobriety test, according to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

A bystander’s video showed Brooks struggling with two officers on the ground outside the Wendy’s before breaking free and running across the parking lot with what appears to be a police TASER in his hand.

A second videotape from the restaurant’s cameras shows Brooks turning as he runs and possibly aiming the TASER at the pursuing officers before one of them fires his gun and Brooks falls to the ground.

Brooks ran the length of about six cars when he turned back toward an officer and pointed what he had in his hand at the policeman, Vic Reynolds, director of the GBI, told a press conference.

“At that point, the Atlanta officer reaches down and retrieves his weapon from his holster, discharges it, strikes Mr. Brooks there on the parking lot and he goes down,” Reynolds said.

Lawyers representing the family of Brooks told reporters that Atlanta police had no right to use deadly force even if he had fired the TASER, a non-lethal weapon, in their direction.

“You can’t shoot somebody unless they are pointing a gun at you,” attorney Chris Stewart said.

Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard, Jr., said in an emailed statement that his office “has already launched an intense, independent investigation of the incident” while it awaits the findings of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

Bottoms said Shields, a white woman appointed police chief in December 2016, would be replaced by deputy chief Rodney Bryant, a black man who will serve as interim chief.

Teacher held

FROM PAGE 12

about Nasim on her Facebook page soon after he died on Saturday.

She deleted the post soon afterwards and apologised for it in another post.

Police received a screenshot of the first post as evidence.



Tourists are seen at the Caffè Quadri at St Mark’s Square yesterday, a day before Italy and neighbouring EU countries open up borders for the first time since the coronavirus outbreak.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Family planning disrupted

FROM PAGE 12

month. “We tried our best to use protection every time, but I don’t know how the barrier failed.”

Afia said having another child now is not an option with a young baby and with no domestic help at home. “At the same time, I cannot think of an abortion as I had one just two months ago.”

This has also created tensions between her and her husband, she said, and affected their relationship.

Afia’s situation depicts how the Covid-19 outbreak and shutdown has impacted family planning and women’s reproductive health.

In April, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) projections predicted that more than 47 million women in low- and middle-income countries will be unable to access modern contraceptives, leading to seven million additional unintended pregnancies, as a result of lockdown-related disruptions to health services over six months.

During the shutdown, fear of contracting the virus by visiting health facilities or urgent domestic and financial concerns, meant many women went without contraception.

This correspondent spoke to several women who said their birth control methods were interrupted during the

shutdown.

Five of seven women who use the injection method -- which needs to be taken every three months -- said they didn’t go to a health facility for their shots in April and May.

Of them, 38-year-old Rahima Begum, mother of four, didn’t go get her injection in April and is uneasy because she missed her last period.

“I didn’t take any other precautions as I had too many worries,” she said.

As a domestic help in Kazipara, Mirpur, she lost her position in several homes at the time as employers didn’t want outsiders coming in to work in their homes and other families returned to their village homes during the shutdown.

Worried about how to pay rent and afford food at home, she neglected her birth control.

“If I get pregnant now, I won’t be able to show my face to my grown sons. I would also have to give up my income,” said Rahima.

Marie Stopes Bangladesh, a well-known organisation providing reproductive health and family planning services, noted that the number of people accessing services declined drastically during the Covid-19 shutdown.

According to the organisation, the

average number of patients visiting its facilities before the shutdown was 23,000 per month; during the shutdown, this figure was 7,000.

This is despite the fact that most of its 49 clinics countrywide were open during the shutdown, according to the organisation, though these were not fully operational, especially in April.

The situation is likely to be as grave in rural areas, say NGO medical officers, where facilities are fewer and further away for villagers.

On a popular pregnancy support group with over 56,000 members on Facebook, “Pregnancy journey & motherhood”, several women spoke about their unintended pregnancies and asked advice on what options they had and where they could seek safe abortions amidst the shutdown. Members include women from across the country -- in both cities and villages.

Some said they resorted to using abortion pills at home, though they would have preferred a safer, supervised procedure, due to restrictions on mobility and fear of visiting crowded health facilities.

Tawfika, who got pregnant in April, took abortion pills which eventually didn’t work and she was uncertain of what to do next. She can’t take the

pills again and now that three months have passed, she cannot have an MR procedure performed.

She is keeping the baby for now but is worried of the effects of the abortion pills on the development of the fetus.

Two newly married women who learned they were pregnant said they were unable to consult a gynecologist about family planning before the shutdown.

Both women said they were financially and mentally unprepared to have a child now -- one woman is currently an undergraduate student, while the other’s husband is uncertain of his job and receiving half-pay at the moment.

Family planning should be ensured as an essential service amidst this fear of coronavirus so people aren’t deterred from accessing these services right now, said Monjun Nahar, advocacy and communication manager at Marie Stopes Bangladesh.

Widespread awareness campaigns about the importance of family planning should be undertaken and protective gear issued to field workers so they can continue to promote family planning services especially in urban slums and rural areas, she said.

[Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the interviewees]

Isolation unit had no Rajuk approval

FROM PAGE 12

already passed their expiry dates, Amit said, adding that the fire service found that there was an approval from the Directorate General of Health Services to build the unit.

The DMP found that the authorities concerned of the hospital had not taken proper steps to rescue the victims and douse the fire, although the victims had sought help, he added, citing the DMP probe report.

Meanwhile, the hospital authorities submitted their report to the HC through their lawyers Mustafizur Rahman Khan and Kazi Ershadul

Alam, saying that the fire at the isolation unit was merely an accident and there was no negligence on the part of the hospital.

Mustafizur told this newspaper that a criminal case has been filed on June 3 in connection with the fire.

An officer has been investigating the incident, he said, adding that the investigation will uncover the reasons for the fire.

The lawyer added that the hospital authorities could not take permission from Rajuk to build the unit because of time constraints as it was built with in a short time to provide urgent

treatment to Covid-19 patients.

The authorities had tried to install adequate fire extinguishers in the unit, but could not find technicians instantly due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the lawyer added.

On June 2, the same HC bench sought probe reports from Rajuk, fire service, DMP, and the hospital. They were asked to submit their probe reports to the court by yesterday.

The HC bench issued the order following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Niaz

Mohammad Mahboob seeking necessary orders.

Niaz submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC on May 31, seeking its directives on the authorities concerned to give Tk 5 crore to each victim’s family and to take necessary action against the persons responsible for the incident.

In the petition, the lawyer included the reports published in The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo, saying that there was negligence on part of the authorities concerned in rescuing the victims.

Virtual courts refuse to hear journo Kajol’s bail plea

FROM PAGE 12

on a bail appeal submitted by Kajol’s lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua in the case filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station as a petition for showing him arrested is now pending.

The case was filed by Saifuzzaman Shikhor, a ruling party lawmaker from Magura-1, with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station on March 9.

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Magistrate Debdash Chandra Adhikary passed the same order

after Kajol’s lawyer submitted a bail petition virtually in the case filed with Hazaribagh Police Station.

As per the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), no bail petition can be filed until or unless a person is shown arrested in a case.

On May 5, the Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime Inspector Motlubur Rahman sought to have him “shown arrested”, but Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah postponed the petition until Kajol was brought to

Dhaka from Jashore. The magistrate asked the jail authorities in Jashore to produce Kajol before his court on June 1.

Kajol, however, was not brought to Dhaka on that date.

Fifty-three days after his disappearance, Kajol was “discovered” by Border Guard Bangladesh in Benapole on May 3.

But he was arrested -- initially on charges of trespassing -- and granted bail in the case after he was produced

before a Jashore court the same day.

But later the same evening, Kajol was shown arrested under section 54 of the CrPC -- and sent to Jashore Central Jail as police informed the court that three more cases were pending with different police stations in the capital.

Section 54 of the CrPC stipulates that a person can be arrested without a warrant if there is credible information of his involvement with a “cognisable offence.”

Global fears of second wave grow

FROM PAGE 12

prepare to reopen borders at the beginning of the summer holiday season after an encouraging drop in contagion.

Of the 57 new cases in China, the highest daily figure since April, 36 were domestic infections in Beijing, where a large wholesale food market at the centre of the outbreak has been closed and nearby housing estates put under lockdown.

“People are scared,” a fruit and vegetable trader at another local market in central Beijing told AFP.

“The meat sellers have had to close. This disease is really scary,” said the man surnamed Sun, adding there were fewer customers than normal.

More than 430,000 people worldwide have died from the respiratory illness, nearly halfway through a year in which countless

lives have already been upended as the pandemic ravages the global economy.

The total number of confirmed cases has doubled to 7.8 million in slightly over a month and the disease is now spreading most rapidly in Latin America, where it is threatening healthcare systems and sparking political turmoil.

Brazil now has the second-highest number of virus deaths after the United States, surpassing Britain’s toll, and the Chilean health minister resigned on Saturday amid a furore over the country’s true number of fatalities.

India reported a record single-day jump in cases yesterday, adding nearly 12,000 confirmed infections and taking the total to more than 320,000, according to health ministry data.

Pakistan recorded its highest

number of cases in a single day with 6,825 new patients, taking the tally to 1,39,230, while more than 80 people lost their lives in the last 24 hours, the health ministry said yesterday.

Former Pakistani prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has tested positive for the coronavirus, his son confirmed on Saturday.

There is still no treatment for Covid-19, but pharmaceutical group AstraZeneca said it has agreed to supply an alliance of European countries with up to 400 million doses of a possible vaccine.

German government sources told AFP a vaccine could be developed by the end of the year.

EUROPE REOPENS

Many European nations are further lifting painful lockdowns that have saved lives and forced caseloads down, but have also caused their economies to

shrink and caused misery for millions.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis travelled to picturesque Santorini island on Saturday to open his country’s tourism season.

After the European Commission urged a relaxation of restrictions, a number of nations are preparing to reopen borders today -- while some like Poland have done so already, with people from other European Union countries allowed to visit.

Germany said it would end land border checks today, and France said it would gradually reopen its borders to non-Schengen countries from July.

In Iran, daily virus death toll has exceeded 100, for the first time in two months. In televised remarks, health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari announced 107 Covid-19 fatalities in the past 24 hours, raising the overall toll to 8,837.

Protecting people

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina said deaths of her two co-fighters -- Nasim and Abdullah -- were very much painful to her as both of them were always beside her in all movements and struggles.

She said Covid-19 brought the whole world to a standstill.

“The world is now under the grip of panic of death. This is very much strange. We’ve never seen this kind of situation in the past,” she said.

In this connection, she said when she was coming to parliament yesterday, many of her well-wishers requested her not to go there.

But she turned down their requests, saying that she had faced bullets, bombs and grenades, and she would not sit idle, fearing the virus.

“This fear has clutched the whole world, whether it is a developed, developing, poor country or a powerful one in terms of arms and money. The situation is the same everywhere,” she said.

The PM said the spread of this virus and deaths started to go up in one place and then it stopped at one stage.

“The wave of this virus has entered South Asia after travelling to western countries,” she said.

She mentioned that the government was trying its best to convince the people to maintain health guidelines properly.

“This is a deadly infectious virus; all have to follow the health guidelines to save themselves,” she said.

Hasina said this was the reality that people could not be left out without feeding them in fear of coronavirus. “We have to look after their livelihoods.”

“We have decided to lockdown the particular places where the infection spread widely so that this spreading could not infect new places,” she said.

In an emotion-choked voice, the PM recalled her memories with Nasim and Abdullah. She termed their deaths irreplaceable loss for the country and AL.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition GM Quader, Matia Chowdhury, Kazi Firoze Rashid, Mrinal Kanti Das, Mostafa Lutfullah, and M Habibe Millat also participated in the condolence motion.

A one-minute silence was observed and a munajat offered seeking eternal peace of the departed souls. Deputy Speaker M Fazle Rabbi Miah conducted the munajat.

Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 12

The United States Air Force honored him as one of the 22 “Living Eagles” of the world. He also received multiple gallantry awards from both Jordan and Iraq for his extraordinary skills and courage.

After serving other air forces, he returned home in 1971 and joined the newly-formed Bangladesh Air Force to serve as the director of flight safety and director of operations.

He was also the chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) from 1982 to 1984 and later from 1987 to 1988.

War crimes trial

FROM PAGE 12

Liberation War. His songs inspired millions of Bangalees during the war. **STRONG TIES WITH NEPAL**

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad today calls on Nepalese King Birendra at his palace. In the 40-minute meeting they discuss various bilateral issues including trade, cultural exchange and resumption of civil aviation services. The King also assures Nepal’s support for Bangladesh’s candidacy in the UN. **GENERAL NIAZI’S CONFESSION**

It is reported in Indian newspaper Vikrant that General Niazi has confessed about the atrocities perpetrated by the Pakistan army during the Liberation War in his book written during his confinement in India as a prison of war. He accuses General Yahya Khan of the bloodshed in former East Pakistan. He also provides gory details of mass murder and brutality orchestrated by General Tikka Khan. Niazi reveals in his book that General Yahya insisted repeatedly that China send troops to the Western Front but China declined that request in fear of possible intervention by the Soviet Union in favour of India. **SOURCES: June 16, 1972 issue of Purbodesh.**

Radar reveals

FROM PAGE 12

The technology can “see” beneath the surface using a radar antenna that sends a pulsed radio signal into the ground and listens for the echoes bouncing off objects. The GPR equipment was pulled over the surface using an all-terrain vehicle.

“This took one person about three to four months in the field,” said Martin Millett, a University of Cambridge classical archaeology professor who helped lead the study published in the journal Antiquity. “This really does change how we can study and understand Roman towns - the way of the future for archaeology.”

Falerii Novi, not quite half the size of ancient Pompeii, had previously been partially excavated but most remained buried. With a population of perhaps 3,000 people, it boasted an unexpectedly elaborate public bath complex and market building, at least 60 large houses and a rectangular temple with columns near the city’s south gate.