

Rohingya front seeks arms to liberate 'homeland'

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Mar 15: The Commander-in-Chief of the Rohingya Islamic Guerrilla Front and Chairman of the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) Nurul Islam has threatened to go into an intensified armed conflict against Myanmar troops in Arakan state if the Rohingya refugee issue is not resolved peacefully, politically.

Talking to this correspondent Islam said, "We are determined to embark on an armed campaign in a bid to liberate our homeland from the tyranny of the Myanmar military junta which is denying our fundamental rights branding us as aliens."

He said, "There is no other alternative except recourse to an armed struggle when the Myanmar government refuses to take the Rohingya refugees back providing full constitutional status."

Islam appealed to the UNO, OIC and other international bodies to come forward in order to create a congenial atmosphere for the safe return of the Rohingya refugees to their homeland in Arakan with their indigenous status guaranteed by the Myanmar constitution or to equip them with arms and ammunition to fight against the oppressors who had driven them from their homeland after unleashing inhuman atrocities.

"We want to die in our homeland and we want military support from the international community and neighbouring countries", Islam said adding "it is better to fight than languish in the refugee camps in Bangladesh". "We do not like to become a burden to a neighbouring country," he also added.

He claimed that so far 1.2 million Rohingyas Muslims have fled Arakan state, home to 4 million people including other ethnic groups, following extermination drives and rampant persecution by Myanmar troops and their collaborators the Moghs since 1942.

Most of them have been wandering from place to place from the Narf river that separates Bangladesh and Myanmar, onwards to India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states still hoping to return to their homeland.

Due to the unabated atrocities in recent months by Myanmar troops another 1,50,000 Rohingyas Muslims joined the fresh influx at the rate of several thousands daily taking shelter on the tip of South eastern Bangladesh leading a miserable life in shanties and poorly built camps, he added.

He called upon the other fellow ethnic groups in the Arakan, particularly the Rhakaines, to support the struggle led by ARIF against a common enemy with mutual recognition and respect.

When asked about the differences between the ARIF and another radical group the RSO (Rohingya Solidarity Organisation) Islam said, "We are trying to revive a bond of unity so that we can fight together for a common cause".

Islam informed that he is commanding the Islamic group comprising 1000 guerrillas equipped with assault weapons including rifles, stenguns and medium machine guns, camped at the zero line near Gandom frontier area between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

In reply to a question he said, "We are now watching developments in the situation with normal mobility instead of direct armed operations inside Arakan."

He claimed that his guerrilla forces had encounter Myanmar troops many times with casualties being inflicted on both sides. But he boldly claimed that his guerrillas trained by foreign instructors, are more gallant and stronger than the Myanmar troops.



Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya brought out a procession in the city on Sunday in protest of the killing of student leader Raju on the Dhaka University campus on Friday last. — Star photo

DU tense : Police patrol strategic points Formation of probe bodies has become a formality

By Masud Arif

The formation of committees to probe into the violent incidents on the campus has turned into a mere formality.

This was observed by the Provost of a residential hall of the Dhaka University yesterday in reference to the authorities' attempt to end violence. In view of the recent violence on the campus that left a student leader killed, this question has again come to the fore.

Moin Hossain Raju, a brilliant student and a leader of the Bangladesh Chhatra Union, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen Friday on the DU campus.

The DU authority has already appointed a committee to investigate into the incident.

A tense situation has been prevailing on the campus since the Friday's fight.

The campus also witnessed a panicky situation Saturday as gunshots followed the gayebana janaza of Raju.

All the entry points of the DU campus are closed. A huge contingent of police has been deployed at the strategic points. Presence of the students in the classes were thin during the last two days.

The teachers of the University have announced a work-abstention for three hours from 10-30 am tomorrow to protest Friday's violence.

The Provost who requests anonymity told The Daily Star that "as long as the political parties continue to patronise the terrorists, whatever attempts the university authority takes will be a futile exercise."

These committees fail to perform due to non-cooperation from students who hardly dare testify before the committees fearing persecution from the armed activists, the Provost said.

Recalling the 1987 expulsion of several students, the Provost says that "the action had led to further violence by the expelled students."

"The problem is a political one," he says adding that "only sincere efforts of the major political parties can solve it."

When asked why the police raided only four halls following the Friday's gunfight, the Provost said that "the police lack adequate manpower to conduct such a large scale operation."

The raid Saturday dawn resulted in the recovery of some firearms from the halls and the arrest of two students including an office-bearer of the Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU).

While talking to The Daily Star some House Tutors alleged that the "armed outsiders" were still moving freely in the residential halls.

IDB assures allout help to resolve Rohingya issue

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) will try to mobilise international opinion for resolving the Rohingya refugee problem, reports UNB.

The assurance came from the visiting IDB delegation when it called on Finance Minister Saifur Rahman at his office Sunday on its return from Cox's Bazar, where it visited different refugee camps.

The delegation went there on March 11 to evaluate the intensity of the problem and assess relief requirement of the refugees.

The IDB team appreciated the steps taken by the government to tackle the situation and assured all possible assistance from the Bank in weathering the crisis.

The mission apprised the Finance Minister that it would recommend the required quantum of assistance in both cash and kind.

Appreciating IDB's response, Saifur Rahman said the magnitude of the man-made human misery was so great that Bangladesh alone cannot address the issue unless the international community and agencies come up with tangible support.

He sought special support from OIC in this regard.

The four-member IDB mission arrived here on March 6 to assess the refugee problem.

The IDB response is an outcome of the Finance Minister's appeal for help during the Bank's board of governors meeting held in Tripoli last month.



Four of the five child-lifters and one of the two recovered children are seen in the photographs. — Star photo

3 children rescued from grip of offenders

By Staff Correspondent

Police rescued three children and arrested seven persons from two houses in Dhaka and Fatullah on Saturday and Sunday.

Two persons were arrested for reportedly kidnapping and torturing a one-year-old child.

Acting on the basis of an FIR lodged by Farida Akhter, Lalbagh police arrested two beggars, Salek and his wife Julekha, from Farida's residence at Rasulpur, Kamrangirchar in outskirts of the city. The arrested persons were tenants there.

Police suspected that as Salek and Julekha were beggars, they tried to maim the child to make her take up begging as a profession.

Falling to find the child's parents, police sent her to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Her condition was said to be critical.

Kajal murder case: Masum sent to jail

Masum Shah arrested in connection with the murder of Nurunnahar Kajal a housewife, was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail Sunday after the end of two day police remand.

Masum is the younger brother of the alleged murderer, Ekram Shah who is still at large.

Nurunnahar Kajal, wife of AHM Raisuddin, was allegedly kidnapped from the Wille's Little Flower School, Kakrail, Wednesday and found dead in a house at East Rajabazar on the same day.

Hasina condemns attack on GCO procession

Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina Sunday condemned the attack by 'government forces' on the mourning procession of Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya at Dhaka University on Saturday, reports UNB.

Police remained mute when the armed attack was launched on the procession brought out after the namaz-e-janaza of Chhatra Union leader Moin Hossain Raju, Hasina alleged.

At one stage, police came in help of the attackers, she added.

Hasina demanded exemplary punishment of the those responsible for the killing of Raju.

GCO observes mourning day today

By DU Correspondent

Country wide mourning day will be observed today (Monday) in protest against the killing of Moin Hossain Raju, a leader of Bangladesh Chhatra Union.

Raju was shot dead by some unidentified gunmen Friday evening on the Dhaka University campus.

The Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO), a left leaning eight-party alliance, will bring out a mourning procession at 10 am from the Auparajeo Bangla of the Dhaka University to condole the death of Raju.

Similar programmes have been chalked out across the country to mourn Raju's death.

Today is the first day of the three-day series of programmes called by GCO protesting the killing of Raju.

Meanwhile, the GCO held a rally in front of the Madhu's canteen, DU Sunday demanding arrest and trial of the killers of Raju.

Addressing the rally GCO leaders Rokonzaman Rokan, Mostafizur Rahman, Informant Minister Nazmul Huda, Begum Selina Rahman MP, Principal Secretary at the Prime Minister's Secretariat Syed Hasan Ahmed, Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, Chief of Protocol Tofael Karim Haider and Director General of the American desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Khurshid Hamid.

The Prime Minister will return home on March 23.

Bid to seize Karen base fails 74 Myanmar troops killed in battle

MAE SOT (Thailand), Mar 15: Seventy-four Myanmar soldiers were killed and about 100 wounded in a failed attempt to seize a stronghold of ethnic Karen rebels, Thai Border Police BPP sources said today.

Four Karen fighters died in the battle at the weekend near the Kaw Moo Ra camp opposite this northern Thai town on the border with Myanmar, the sources said.

Myanmar soldiers frequently cross into Thailand to attack retreating Karen rebels, who are the strongest of a dozen ethnic minorities that have fought Yangon for autonomy since gained independence from Britain in 1948.

Colonel Niphan Sripaiboon said more than 100 shells fired by Myanmar artillerymen had "strayed" across the border and landed in an uninhabited area of northwestern Thailand near the Thai border village of Ban Wang Kaw on Saturday, according to AFP.

"The Myanmar gunners were attempting to shell the KNU's Kawmura camp located on the Myanmar side of the Moel border river, but their aim was a bit off and a lot of 105 mm and 75 mm shells landed on our side," Niphan said. "Luckily, none hit the border village."

Railwaymen

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stations to check illegal travelling and misappropriation of the resources of the department, and employment of 'freight-forwarders' at all the stations on commission basis to motivate the traders to use rail facilities in transporting goods.

The measures also included withdrawal of the rebate facilities for the postal and defence departments, import of 80 container wagons to introduce container service in the Dhaka-Chittagong route and enhancement of the rate of the revenue tax on the lands of the railway department.

The government had also taken strong measures to control the over-time bills of the railway staff and reduce the expenses in construction and preservation works, Col (ret) Oli said, adding that the government had successfully kept the loss of the sector confined to Taka 146 crore in the current fiscal year despite the price hike of diesel and enhancement of the salaries of the railway staff.

He mentioned that the loss figure should have been Taka 176 crore with the additional expenses of Taka 26 crore (due to price hike of diesel and enhanced salaries) with the previous year's loss of Taka 150 crore.

The Minister informed that the operating expenses in the sector increased 16 times in 1990-91 compared to that of 1969-70, whereas the income increased only nine times during the period.

PM leaves

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the two leaders will cover important matters like bilateral trade, garment export and food aid under PL-480.

An agreement between Dhaka and Washington on food aid under PL-480 is likely to be signed during the visit, officials here said.

Her 10-member entourage includes Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Information Minister Nazmul Huda, Begum Selina Rahman MP, Principal Secretary at the Prime Minister's Secretariat Syed Hasan Ahmed, Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, Chief of Protocol Tofael Karim Haider and Director General of the American desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Khurshid Hamid.

The Midnight File

Mujahideen capture Afghan district

ISLAMABAD, Mar 15: Guerrillas fighting the Afghan government said today they had captured a strategic district in the northern province of Samangan bordering Uzbekistan. The whole district of Khulm along the main highway from Kabul to the former Soviet Central Asian Republic came under guerrilla control with the capture of the administrative centre of Tashqurghan on Friday, said a guerrilla news service in neighbouring Pakistan, reports Reuter.

Armenia, Azerbaijan sign ceasefire agreement

TEHRAN, Mar 15: Armenia and Azerbaijan today signed an Iranian-brokered draft accord here calling for a ceasefire in the disputed territory of Nagorny-Karabakh, Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati announced. Velayati told reporters the former Soviet republics would also lift economic sanctions against each other, under the terms of the accord. It would take effect after endorsement by the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, he said, reports AFP.

Highwaymen stab 15 passengers

From Our Correspondent

RAJBARI, Mar 15: Fifteen bus passengers were injured when a band of armed robbers assaulted them in a bus on the Faridpur Barisal highway near Chhagal Chera at around 3.00 am today.

One Ripon (20) has been taken to the Institute of Chest Diseases and Hospital as he was seriously injured.

The bus, Palash Paribahan, of the Dhaka-Gopalganj route, was stopped near Chhagal Chera by the robbers who got aboard and stabbed fifteen persons, including the bus driver, and got away safely after robbing the passengers, police sources said.

Earlier, two bus robberies occurred on the same spot according to local people.

BUET may introduce petroleum, mineral resources course

By BUET Correspondent

Bangladesh will soon be able to reduce dependency on expatriate experts in the sector of petroleum and mineral resources of the country.

This was viewed by the speakers on the second day of a five-day long seminar on "Introduction to Drilling and Production" being held at the seminar room of the computer centre of BUET under the auspices of Alberta-BUET institutional linkage project.

The speakers said that our local experts could very well substitute the foreign consultants if the proper technical know how with the help of necessary laboratory facilities were provided.

The only petroleum laboratory in the country installed at BUET can play a vital role in providing technical supports and various testing facilities to different gas and petroleum oriented companies of the country, the speakers observed.

The Alberta-BUET institutional linkage project earlier set a laboratory financed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for the petroleum and mineral resources department of BUET and expected to begin courses at bachelors and masters degree level by the end of 1992.

Mr George Sutherland, Director of Canadian Petroleum Training Institute also spoke at the seminar as an observer-expert and highlighted prospects of gas appraisal study in the context of Bangladesh.

Representatives from different petroleum and gas-oriented companies like Petrobranga, Sylhet Gas Field, Titas Gas Limited, PDB, BAPEX, chemical and mechanical department of BUET participated in the seminar.

The seminar will conduct some short courses on drilling and exploration of petroleum and mineral resources for the local experts.

Biman employee killed in accident

A woman, seriously injured by a speeding truck near Arambagh police box, died on way to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital Sunday, Bubul Akhter (35), Senior Communicating Assistant of Biman, was way home when her car was hit by the truck at 4 pm near her residence at Arambagh, reports UNB.

World Cup

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match reduced to 30-overs by morning rain. South Africa then scored 181 for four in reply, reaching the victory target with five balls to spare.

South Africa joined New Zealand and England in the semifinals. The fourth qualifier will be either the two-time champion West Indies, defending champion Australia of Pakistan.

New Zealand clinched top spot in the first round standings when they scored their seventh straight win.

Injury-hit England struggled to 200 for eight off their allocated 50 overs and the Kiwis made 201 for three in response with 9.1 bvers to spare.

Both teams were assured of semifinal places going into the match, but New Zealand sizzled while England rarely even simmered.

Pakistan, meanwhile, kept alive their slim hopes of advancing with a thrilling four-wicket win over already-eliminated Sri Lanka in Perth.

Responding to Sri Lanka's 212 for six, Pakistan made 216 for six with five balls to spare.

To qualify for the semifinals, Pakistan need to beat New Zealand in their final first round match and to hope Australia defeat the West Indies.

No matches are scheduled Monday or Tuesday, with the final three first round matches slated for Wednesday.

Australia face the West Indies in their crucial contest in Melbourne, with England playing Zimbabwe in Albury and New Zealand facing Pakistan in Christchurch.

Semifinals will be played March 21 and 22 in Auckland and Sydney.

(Details on Sports Pages).

Nigerian held

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Eliadah McCord and Robert Blankson, who were earlier arrested in connection with heroin trafficking.

Ruhul Amin said, DB received significant information on the heroin-trafficking ring from Goddy Sunday.

Eliadah, an American teenage girl, was arrested from ZIA last month for carrying 3.3 kg heroin and her accomplice Blackson was later nabbed at Benapole border.

Raushan docked

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7.9.1991. A supplementary chargesheet was also submitted later.

Before they sat side by side in the dock, Ershad briefly met Raushan in the court room where their two children were also present. He enquired about his wife's welfare as he saw her nearly after a year of transfer from the Gulshan sub-jail to Dhaka Central Jail.

Defence lawyers prayed for the extensions of balls of Raushan Ershad and fifteen others. Attorney General Aminul Haq supported the contention of Sarfuddin Khan Mukul, who appeared on behalf of the former "First Lady".

Later the Attorney General asked permission to issue official gazette notification for the three accused persons who are absconding.

Special Judge Ismail Miah ordered for the notification and fixed March 30 as the next date of the case.

Besides the former president and his wife, prominent among the accused persons included former minister M A Sattar, former chairman of Rajuk S M Rahmatullah and former parliament member Hajj Abdul Wadud.

The case is popularly known as Janata Tower case, because it refers to the multi-storied building of Janata Publishers Company. Begum Raushan Ershad is the chairman of the company, while Mr M A Sattar is a director.

Editor: S. M. Ali
Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam
Published by S. M. Ali on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 28/1, Toynbee Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: PABX- 246023-4, 245061-2. Advertisement: 245063 & Ext. 20. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.