

Taliban to try Laden 'if US provides proof'

REUTERS, Islamabad

Afghanistan's ruling Taliban are prepared to put Osama bin Laden on trial in an Afghan court if the United States provides solid evidence against him, Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef said yesterday.

"We are prepared to try him, if America provides solid evidence of Osama bin Laden's involvement in attacks in New York and Washington," Zaeef told Reuters.

Asked if the Taliban was prepared to allow a trial of bin Laden in another country, he said: "We are willing to talk about that, but the first is that we must be given the evidence."

The hunt for Laden took a major step forward when Pakistan said he was probably behind suicide plane attacks on America and the United States revealed it had an inkling of where he was hiding.

Britain released a document, supported by the United States, which detailed evidence against bin Laden and concluded the Saudi-born extremist, as well as his Shadowy al Qaeda network, had the will and resources to carry out further attacks.

AP from Dubai says, New images of Osama bin Laden appeared yesterday on an Arab television station, showing the terror suspect somber and composed amid a celebration by his followers at an arid mountain base.

The station, Al-Jazeera, said it believed the video was made recently. The Qatar station did not say whether the footage was shot before or after the Sept. 11 terror attacks on the United States, or how the station obtained it.

The video has bin Laden standing side by side with his top lieutenant, Egyptian Ayman al-Zawahri. Al-Jazeera said the footage was believed to record a celebration of the union of bin Laden's al-Qaida network and al-Zawahri's Egyptian Jihad group.

The gathering, at an al-Qaida camp with dry, rugged mountains in the background, also marked the graduation of a group of newly trained fighters into al-Qaida, Al-Jazeera said. Singing and the beating of drums ring out in the video.

The incident occurred after Juma prayers. An altercation arising from a political debate between the two groups inside the BNP office led to the gunfight in which Masum was injured, sources said.

The feuding groups slipped away before police rushed to the spot, the local people said.

But the duty officer of Kotwali Police Station, when contacted at 10:00 last night, said he was not wise to the incident.

US, European envoys

They also called for a dialogue between the two sides to prevent backlash following the October 1 election.

He said the diplomats listened to the grievances of Awami League against irregularities and rigging during the polls.

They told the Awami League leadership that the question of rigging and irregularities in the elections should be resolved by constitutional means like election tribunals.

The envoys who met Hasina included US Ambassador Mary Ann Peters, Canadian High Commissioner David Preston and British High Commissioner Dr David Carter.

The Awami League chief said her party has already announced a street agitation until October 9.

The envoys, known as the Tuesday Group, expressed concern over violence and intimidation against Awami League leaders and activists by the winning party's activists in different places and called for a halt.

"We deplore this violence against Awami League," EC head of delegation Ambassador Antonio De Souza Menezes told UNB after their meeting with AL President Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

He said the matter of violence and intimidation was also raised during their meeting with BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia on Thursday, when she assured that such acts of revenge would be discouraged.

Chittagong AL

that the party would secure 10 seats in the district.

However, some of the AL leaders here have remained tight-lipped and are maintaining low profile after the election debacle of the party.

Talking to this correspondent, former minister and city AL president M A Mannan said, "Though I could not see any trouble in my constituency (Chittagong-9), it seems that something happened somewhere that led to our defeat."

BNP's Abdullah Al Noman defeated him.

AL city unit Vice President Nurul Islam, BSC, told this correspondent that faulty nomination, terrorism by party activists and more female voters in favour of BNP-led alliance were the factors behind AL's debacle here. He had filed nomination as rebel AL candidate from Chittagong-9 (Kotwali) constituency but later withdrew at the request of the party chief.

Some AL insiders said that the local AL leaders are trying to stage a movement to restore the morale of party activists and to organise them again.



The namaj-e-janaza of Alema Bhashani, who died on Thursday night, was held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday.

5 killed in post-polls clashes

FROM PAGE 12 of Awami League activists.

Hearing the news, BNP activists rushed to the spot and locked in a clash with AL activists, leaving Moktar dead and five others injured. They were admitted to nearby hospital and clinics.

Kapasia police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Our Correspondent from Feni reports: An Awami League activist was beaten to death allegedly by BNP supporters at village Ahmampur under Sonagazi thana on Thursday night.

The dead was identified as Shafiqul, 50.

Police and villagers said BNP men attacked the house of Shafiqul on Thursday night. They beat up Shafiqul and ransacked his home.

Shafiqul succumbed to injuries on way to hospital.

Police sent the body to Feni Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. No case was filed in this connection till 6 pm yesterday.

In separate incident, BNP activists attacked and ransacked residence of a Jubo League worker Karimullah Azad in Balgaon union at noon yesterday.

Witnesses said, the supporters of Awami League-backed Gulzar group and pro-BNP Ratan group clashed each other over appointment of Mutwali (caretaker) of Al-Amin Jame Masjid soon after the Juma prayers.

Six houses and shops were ransacked during the clash, witnesses said.

Locals said, Ratan was removed from the post of Mutwali five years ago when Awami League came to power. The clash ensued as Ratan again wanted to become Mutwali replacing Gulzar after BNP won Monday's national election.

The gunmen fled the scene as police rushed to the spot.

In Magura, post-election clashes between the supporters of Awami League and BNP in a remote area of Sreepur upazila on Thursday left 40 people injured.

Witnesses said, the trouble erupted at about 5 pm in Amalsar area. Both sides used lethal weapons and ransacked some houses and shops in the area.

Nine of the injured Maznu Sheikh, Bishu Sheikh, Zahir, Jasim, Mohsin, Ahmad, Abu Bakar, Asgar Sheikh and Bashir Ahmed - were admitted to Sadar Hospital.

In addition, over a hundred people were injured in separate clashes between Awami League and BNP activists in different parts in the district yesterday.

Our Pabna Correspondent

Gesture

FROM PAGE 1 racy and we have to accept it. From now on, we will work together for the development of the city."

Earlier, Khoka embraced Mayor Hanif and his son, and stayed at the latter's Nazirabad residence for over an hour.

relatively peaceful and that they were conducted generally in accordance with international standards.

"These reports run counter to public statements of massive rigging, the statement said, adding "any complaints should follow normal legal channels of appeal rather than a complete refusal to recognise the elections' legitimacy."

He said Bangladeshi leaders have a serious obligation to future generations to turn Bangladesh's political culture away from the course of violence and vengeance at this critical moment in the country's history.

He said the party would secure 10 seats in the district.

However, some of the AL leaders here have remained tight-lipped and are maintaining low profile after the election debacle of the party.

Talking to this correspondent, former minister and city AL president M A Mannan said, "Though I could not see any trouble in my constituency (Chittagong-9), it seems that something happened somewhere that led to our defeat."

BNP's Abdullah Al Noman defeated him.

AL city unit Vice President Nurul Islam, BSC, told this correspondent that faulty nomination, terrorism by party activists and more female voters in favour of BNP-led alliance were the factors behind AL's debacle here. He had filed nomination as rebel AL candidate from Chittagong-9 (Kotwali) constituency but later withdrew at the request of the party chief.

Some AL insiders said that the local AL leaders are trying to stage a movement to restore the morale of party activists and to organise them again.

Alema Bhashani laid to rest

UNB, Tangail

Alema Bhashani was buried beside the grave of her husband Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani at Santosh in the district yesterday.

Alema Bhashani died on Thursday night at the age of 94 at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital. She was suffering from cancer and old-age complications.

Her first namaj-e-janaza was held at the Baitul Mukarram national mosque and the second one at Bindubashini Boy's High School premises in Tangail.

Alema Bhashani was born in 1907 at Panchbibi of Joypurhat district. In 1925, Alema got married to Maulana Bhashani. She donated all her assets to Panchbibi Haji Mohsin College.

She left behind one son, two daughters, grandsons and granddaughters and a host of admirers.

BSS adds: Chief adviser Justice Latifur Rahman yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of Alema Bhashani.

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League president Sheikh Hasina also expressed her deep shock at the death of Alema Bhashani.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1 party's Banani office and houses of top leaders and Khaleda's influential aides. The top leaders are now busy meeting new MPs and aspirants for ministerial posts.

Most of the newly elected MPs belonging to BNP and the alliance reached Dhaka yesterday and the rest will reach today, BNP sources said.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet Division has almost completed all preparations for the oath-taking ceremony at the Bangabhaban. It has prepared about 60 files for would-be ministers and state ministers.

More than 1000 guests are expected to be invited. The Cabinet Division has sought a list of guests from BNP.

Members of parliament, advisory council of the caretaker government, political leaders, judges, intellectuals, diplomats, high civil and military officials, journalists and elite of the city will attend the oath-taking ceremony on Monday.

Khulna AL

FROM PAGE 12 The occupation of fish farms at gunpoint and shrimp cultivation in the forcibly occupied paddy fields by AL and Jubo League leaders with the help of armed cadres annoyed the voters of rural areas, said political insiders.

Some party leaders said the unwanted campaigning by the field workers of two NGOs in favour of AL candidates displeased the electorate.

Moreover, candidates of the four-party alliance cashed in on the AL's disadvantages.

JCD vows

FROM PAGE 12 JCD went for the indefinite strike from July 29 to press a five-point demand including resignation of the VC and called off it on August 12 when their 'ousted' activists were 'rehabilitated' in dormitories.

Then it enforced strike again from August 17 when BCL activists 'ousted' JCD leaders and workers from dormitories following the killing of a BCL leader at Ziaur Rahman Hall.

Academic and other activities at the university were disrupted for 64 days due to the strike in two phases.

JCD leaders present at the press briefing included Shahabuddin Ahmed Laltu, Monzur Elahi, ABM Moshfar Hossain, Monir Hossain, Mostafizul Islam Mamun, Sultan Salauddin Tuku, Azizul Bari Helal, Farhad Hossain Azad, Asaduzzaman Asad, Haidar Ali Lelin and Benzir Ahmed Tito.

Uzbekistan

FROM PAGE 1 East and Central Asia to build support for the international battle against terrorism, said Thursday the battle may involve less use of military force than is commonly assumed.

He offered the strongest suggestion yet that while the US military will play a role, its contribution may be relatively small. Some also believe military action may not come soon. The French defense minister said no retaliation is expected for several weeks.

On the other hand, Rumsfeld did not rule out the possibility of taking military action to ensure that the Taliban's air defense forces not pose a threat to the delivery of American food aid to parts of Afghanistan. He said Thursday US military planes would make airdrops of food, but said details were being worked out.

The United States has assembled more than 30,000 troops in the region around Afghanistan, including two aircraft carrier battle groups, a contingent of Marines, hundreds of land-based warplanes and preparations for Army special operations soldiers to conduct hit-and-run raids inside Afghanistan.

Rumsfeld, however, seemed to indicate that the first purpose of that growing military might is to apply financial squeeze rather than to launch a major attack. He stressed that it would eventually succeed.

CHOGM likely to be held March 2-5

AP, Canberra

Australia has suggested that a meeting of 45 national leaders from British Commonwealth nations cancelled last week should be rescheduled for March, Prime Minister John Howard said on Wednesday.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and 45 leaders from Britain and its former colonies were due to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government, Meeting, or CHOGM, from today, in Brisbane, the capital of Queensland state.

However, the meeting was postponed when it became clear that the British, Canadian and Indian prime ministers would be unable to attend, due mainly to the fallout from last month's terrorist attacks in the United States.

Howard said he was working with the Commonwealth secretary-general Don McKinnon, who he met with Tuesday, to get the meeting rescheduled for March 2-5.

"That is a date which is acceptable to us, it's acceptable to the Commonwealth Secretariat, it's acceptable to the Queensland government," Howard told Sydney radio station 2UE.

"Right as we speak, he's (McKinnon) in the process of talking to other Commonwealth leaders so that we can get the meeting reinstated," Howard said.

Encompassing almost all of the British Empire's former colonies and dependencies, the Commonwealth has 54 member states accounting for 30 per cent of the world's population. Members include Britain, Australia, Canada, India, Pakistan, New Zealand, a range of Pacific and Caribbean Island nations and many African states.

Two die in oil tanker explosion at Joypurhat

UNB, Joypurhat

Two people died on the spot when an oil tanker exploded near the district bus terminal yesterday. The dead were identified as Tanjil Hossain, 22, a welding worker, of village Rasulpur in Panchbibi upazila and Shahadul Islam, 26, the tank lorry helper of village Hanail in Sadar upazila.

Witnesses said the empty oil tanker suddenly exploded at about 5:10 pm as gas welding was being done on it.

Hall capture

FROM PAGE 12 Mohakhali bus terminals, Syedabad and Fulbaria bus terminals are now being controlled by new groups.

The group led by commissioner Chowdhury Alam has taken control of the Fulbaria Bus Terminal ousting Nuru-Kamrul group. Munna-Nasir group has also taken over the Syedabad bus terminal earlier controlled by Khairul-Masoom group.

A pro-AL leader at the Fulbaria Bus Terminal told The Daily Star that such practices have been going on for years. "Now they (BNP-led alliance) are going to form the government and it is not possible for us to maintain our supremacy at the terminal."

During the extended meeting of the AL Working Committee on Thursday, Sheikh Hasina alleged that even before the formation of a new government, supporters of the four-party alliance had started occupying university student halls as well as bus and launch terminals across the country.

Bogra-6

FROM PAGE 12 biggest winning margin of 1,72,573 votes.

Bogra-6 is one of the five parliamentary seats from where Khaleda's contested the election. She won in all five seats.

In the last general election, the BNP chief got 1,36,669 votes against 88,059 polled by Mukul who was then an Awami League nominee in the Bogra seat.

Interestingly, an independent candidate, Mohammad Ali has been elected from the Noakhali-6 constituency by polling 37,475 votes, defeating his strongest contender Prof Waliullah of AL who got 33,021 votes.

Among the losers in the October 1 polls, the person who bagged the highest number of votes in any given seat is Kamal Ahmed Majumdar of AL with 1,63,659 votes in Dhaka-11. He was defeated there by BNP's SA Khaleque who got 1,94,944 votes.

Dengue under control

FROM PAGE 1 regions around the world, predominantly in urban areas.

There are four types of Dengue virus. Aedes mosquito acquires the virus by feeding on blood of an infected person. It can transfer the virus to its next generation by laying eggs, which can remain dormant for up to a year.

Humans are the main host of the virus that is circulated in the blood of an infected person for 2-8 days approximately.

Dengue infection causes mild fever and pain behind eyes, muscles and joints, and often causes rash.

DHF, a complicated form of the infection, can be fatal. It is characterised by high fever, bleeding with plasma or fluid loss and often with enlargement of liver. Commonly, the fever causes sudden temperature accompanied with facial flush.

Recovery from infection provides lifelong immunity from that particular type of virus but gives partial and temporary protection from the other three types.

"There is no specific treatment for dengue. With proper management, even a DHF patient can recover if the loss of body fluid is

Three brothers of Suja sued for intimidating voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Four separate cases were filed with Khulna police station on Thursday night against three brothers of former whip Mostafa Rashidi Suja on charge of intimidating voters.

The accused persons are Moazzem Rashidi Doja, general secretary of Khulna District Sports Association, Mozaffar Rashidi Reza, KCC commissioner of ward no 35 and Murtaza Rashidi Dara, member of Khulna city Awami League.

None of the accused was arrested till filing of this report at 4 pm yesterday.

Army chief

FROM PAGE 12 dence yesterday morning and expressed the hope that under her dynamic leadership, the country would march towards peace, progress and prosperity.

The sources further said Khaleda Zia thanked the army chief and conveyed through him her greetings to all members of the army for their role in ensuring peaceful holding of the election. The nation will remember them for maintaining neutrality and ensuring law and order on the polls day and security to the voters, she added.

Turncoats

FROM PAGE 12 and contested from Laxmipur-4. Both lost.

Mahbubul Alam Tara joined AL from BNP and Col (ret) Zafar Imam joined AL from Jatiya Party (Ershad). Both were defeated in the electoral battle in Feni-3 and Feni-1 constituencies respectively.

Fazle Rabbi quit JP (Ershad), joined AL and contested the polls from Gaibandha-5. Abu Leich Md Mubin Chowdhury and Nasir Chowdhury joined BNP from JP-Ershad and participated in the electoral race from Habiganj-3 and Sunamganj-2 respectively. All the three suffered defeat.

Voters say 'no'

FROM PAGE 12 terrorism and corruption by rejecting them and want peace and prosperity in the society.

Some other infamous godfathers who have allegations of terrorism against them however got elected with the BNP ticket. They are: VP Joyal Abedin in Feni-2, Nasiruddin Pintoo in Dhaka-8 and Joyal Abedin Faruque in Noakhali-1.

Many people feel that the newly elected MPs should keep in mind that the ordinary people would no longer hesitate to punish their MPs of choice by rejecting them if the crime of their predecessors were repeated.

Dengue under control

Development of vaccine is difficult because any one of the four types of virus may cause the disease, and protection against one or two could actually increase the risk of more serious disease. Nonetheless, efforts are underway to develop vaccines against Dengue," said one expert studying the viruses.

The mosquito breeds in fresh water in containers like earthen jars, empty pots, old tyres and flowerpots and not in stagnant drain water.

In Bangladesh, dengue was first detected in early 50s and subsequently in late 1970s. It re-appeared in mid-80s.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Chief Health Officer Dr Mohammed Ashraf Uddin said, "This year, we are well prepared to deal with Dengue. We have moved all our resources for a massive awareness campaign and I believe since there is no cure, it is best to prevent it."

The Asian Development Bank provided four million dollars to four city corporations recently for their emergency mosquito control programmes under the Urban Primary Healthcare Programme.