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US rains down bombs and missiles on Afghanistan

Taliban are not terrorists, says Pakistan

REUTERS, Kabul

The United States took its military campaign against Afghanistan into a second week yesterday, raining down bombs and missiles as part of efforts to force the ruling Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden.

"They (the strikes) were robust," one US defence official told the wire service, adding that about 50 Navy attack jets and as many as 10 heavy Air Force B-1 and B-52 bombers had been used against 13 targets, including Taliban troop concentrations.

Defence officials said a fourth American aircraft carrier, USS Theodore Roosevelt, had moved

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An Afghan man sits near the graves of his family members who he said were killed in US-led air strikes on the village of Kadam near Jalalabad yesterday. The Taliban militia said some 200 civilians were killed in the air strikes there.

BB Governor confined for 3 hours

STAR REPORT

Members of the Bangladesh Bank Officers Association (BBOA) confined Governor of the Central Bank Dr Mohammed Farashuddin in his office for about three hours yesterday.

According to sources, the BBOA members demanded a change in the policy in which three promotees are supposed to be upgraded for recruitment of one person.

Earlier, the governor made a change in the rule in which the ratio

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Donors set priority reform agenda

SHAHRIAR KARIM

The donors have set some priority reform agenda for the new government to fulfil on an immediate basis, which can well decide the fate of any future assistance, according to sources.

The reforms include separation of judiciary, establishment of the office of an Ombudsman, setting up of an independent anti-corruption commission, complete independence of the Comptroller and Auditor General's office, privatisation of

telecom sector and other necessary measures that once taken will have a positive impact on governance.

The Country Director of the World Bank Frederick T Temple on Sunday met the newly appointed Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman at the latter's office to convey the donors' views.

When contacted, Saifur Rahman admitted to having received the donor's list of reform agenda and said that these were for the country's betterment.

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BNP may ask AL to nominate Deputy Speaker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to ask the Awami League to propose a name for the deputy speaker to be nominated from the opposition bench.

"We are yet to arrive at a final decision but thinking of offering the post to the MPs belonging to the main opposition," BNP General Secretary and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told The Daily Star last night.

But Shah AMS Kibria, the former finance minister who was also the

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Cabinet meets PM confident of restoring law & order

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia held her first cabinet meeting yesterday expressing the confidence that her government would be able to do the arduous task of restoring law and order, putting an end to the "chaotic situation" created over the last five years.

She said this is possible with cooperation from the people and hard work and honesty of the government.

"We have taken responsibility under a situation where law-and-order deteriorated at all levels in the last five years," she said in her opening remarks at the maiden cabinet meeting held at the Prime Minister's

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Police fail to arrest minister's son in Kushtia

UNB, Kushtia

Police raided the house of Bachchu Molla, son of a state minister at Faragunia in Daulatpur in the early hours of yesterday but he managed to escape arrest.

Bachchu went into hiding before the raid. Probably he was earlier informed about the directive to arrest him, police sources said.

He was wanted in connection with a case filed by Zahurul Islam, a local journalist, accusing him and his accomplices of issuing death-threats to Islam.

However, a number of people said they saw Bachchu moving freely in town and leaving in a microbus along with associates at 11 am yesterday. "He could be easily arrested if police were sincere," said a shopkeeper requesting anonymity.

Journalists in the town were suffering from insecurity as Bachchu threatened them on Sunday.

Saifur hints at gas export

Decision to be based on economic reality, not political rhetoric, bureaucrats told

STAR REPORT

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman has indicated that the government may go for gas export provided that it is beneficial for the country.

"There are opposite views on this issue (gas export), but we have to take a decision based on economic reality," Saifur Rahman told officials of the Planning Commission and the External Resource Division (ERD) at the commission's conference room in the city yesterday.

However, while talking to The

Daily Star after the meeting, the minister said, "I cannot take the decision on my own. The cabinet has to sit and take the decision. However, I can say as much that we will take the decision based on economic reality, not on political consideration."

When his attention was drawn to his remarks on gas export at the meeting with the bureaucrats, the minister said, "No resource in true sense is a resource if it remains under the soil and not properly utilised. We can't keep it under the

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M Saifur Rahman

Home minister on minority repression Reports politically motivated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury has termed press reports about attacks on the religious minorities "baseless, exaggerated and politically motivated".

"In fact, it is entirely a staged drama, a pre-planned game. A certain (political) party is sponsoring terrorism to undermine the BNP and create people's mistrust about the ruling party," he told a news conference at the Cabinet Division conference room of the secretariat

yesterday.

"We smell political motive (in such occurrences). Money is being spent on terrorists and, in cases, the BNP people are also being used," said the former air-chief-turned-politician. "In a few places, the terrorists are being instigated... we've ordered stern action against all terrorists irrespective of their party affiliations."

Referring to his visit yesterday to some areas in Barisal and Gopalganj where, according to newspaper

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Stop killings, attacks on minorities: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the newly installed BNP-led coalition government to stop killings across the country.

Otherwise, she warned, the government will be made responsible for any consequences.

After having a glimpse of a slain party man, whose body was brought to the party's central office at

Bangabandhu Avenue in the city, a grief-stricken Hasina briefly addressed an impromptu meeting there last night.

Several hundred agitated party activists were protesting the killing of Moktar Hossain, general secretary of the party's unit under city Ward No. 47. They held the 'henchmen of new premier Khaleda Zia'

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Attack on AL meet: Zillur's car damaged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terrorists attacked an Awami League meeting in the city's Mirpur area yesterday evening damaging several vehicles including that of party general secretary Zillur Rahman.

Sources said several bombs were hurled during a meeting at the office-cum-residence of party

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