

Warlords squabble over Kandahar

Karzai rejects report on Omar's capture

REUTERS, Kabul

With the Taliban finished in all but name mystery surrounded the whereabouts yesterday of its spiritual leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, as Afghan warlords squabbled over his Kandahar headquarters. After weeks of punishing attacks by US Warplanes, the Taliban surrendered the ancient city that was their birthplace and final hold-out on Friday to Afghan rivals, and headed off into the history books. But Omar went to ground.

One of the Pashtun tribal chiefs jostling for control of the southern city said Omar had disappeared, another said he was still there with 1,000 followers, and the US military said it did not know where he -- or top foe Osama bin Laden -- was.

In the city, victorious anti-Taliban factions confirmed the outside world's fears by skirmishing to carve out rival fiefdoms as their unity evaporated along with their common enemy.

But they convened a traditional Shura, or council, to try to agree



MOLLAH OMAR

No trace of Laden

REUTERS, Kabul

Anti-Taliban forces yesterday said they were mopping up at a mountain hideout of bin Laden, who is wanted dead or alive by the United States for allegedly plotting the hijacked airliner attacks on New York and Washington that killed nearly 4,000 people.

But the US backed forces have so far found no trace of the Saudi-born multimillionaire in a warren of

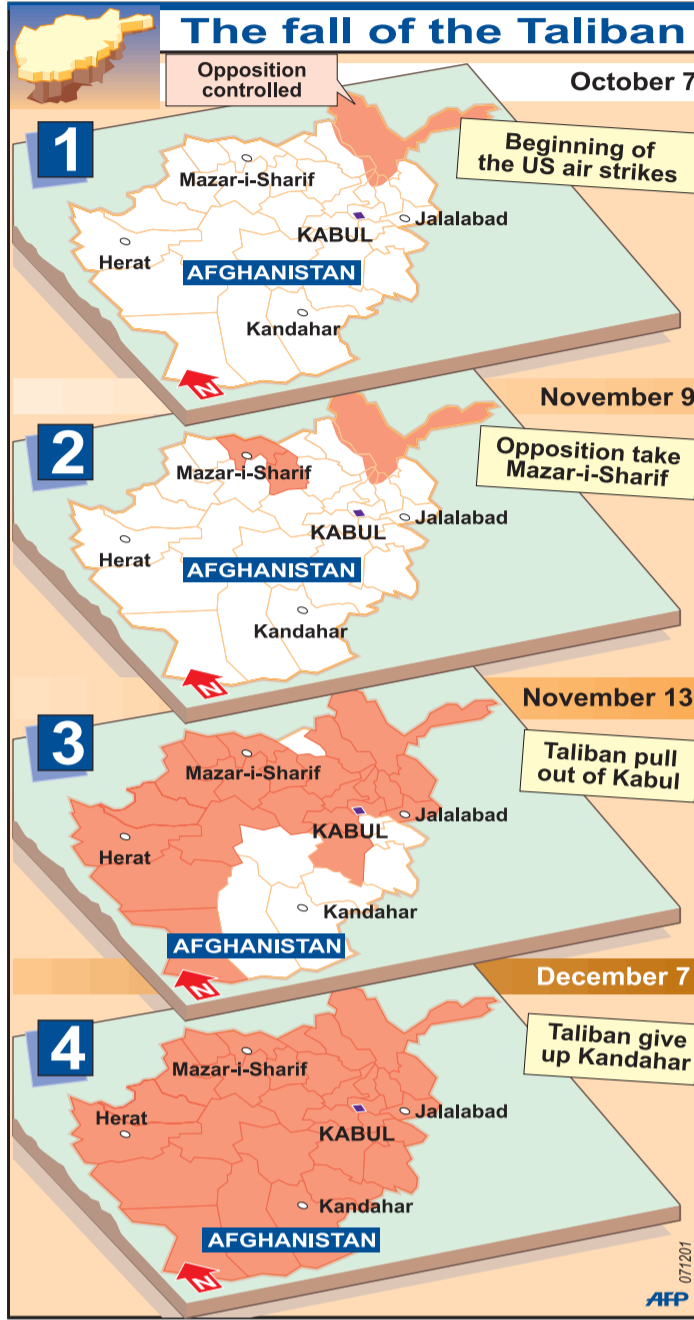
caves in the Tora Bora area. US commanders believe he is still in Afghanistan, but others suggest he may have crossed the Pakistani border.

Franks said Tora Bora, near the eastern city of Jalalabad, was not fully in the hands of anti-Taliban forces. CNN said US planes kept up air strikes on hideouts in the region overnight.

Pakistan said it had moved



OSAMA BIN LADEN



Fresh bid to seal a deal with Niko

Unexplored gasfield being shown as marginal one

SHARIER KHAN

The government has revived a plan to award an unexplored oil and gas field to a Canadian company, Niko Resources, in the name of marginal gas field development, sources said.

A marginal gas field is one which has already been explored, used or abandoned.

During the fag end of the Awami League rule, the highest authorities put pressure on Bangladeshi exploration company BAPEX and its parent organisation Petrobrangla to sign an agreement with Niko to develop three marginal gas fields. However, the deal could not be signed as it needed amendments to certain rules and approval of a policy under which Niko was to work.

A Petrobrangla official said only a few weeks ago the energy ministry revived the move and sought a status

report on the Niko deal from Petrobrangla and BAPEX. BAPEX has sent a summary report to Petrobrangla, which is expected to send it to the ministry soon.

Another source said a lobby, keen on sealing the deal during the tenure of the past government, has managed to convince the incumbent government that the agreement should be immediately signed to attract foreign investment.

The three marginal gas fields -- Kamta, Feni and Chhatak -- now belong to Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Ltd (BGFCL). Of these three gas fields, Petrobrangla had objected to terming the one at Chhatak a marginal gas field. It said Chhatak's eastern part is an unexplored area and as such, it can not be termed marginal.

Chhatak field was originally identified as a potential

Armed miscreants kill 80 in Khulna Div since Oct 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Armed miscreants killed 80 people in ten districts of Khulna division from October 1 to December 7 this year, according to official sources.

More than 400 incidents of dacoity, mugging, gun looting, kidnapping, illegal occupation of property and extortion were reported to police during the period.

Purbo Banglar Communist Party claimed responsibility for eight of the 80 murders.

The eight victims include BNP leader MA Awal and fish exporter Farhad Hossain of Bagerhat, BNP leader Babul Shaikh of Fakirhat, Awami League leader Asabul Huq of Chuadanga, Deen Mohammad Biswas of Narail, fish trader Ruhul Amin Ghazi of Khulna and Sultan

Mir of Satkhira.

The rest 72 murders include 12 in Khulna, eight in Satkhira, seven each in Bagerhat, Kushtia and Chuadanga, five in Jessore, three each in Magura and Meherpur, and two each in Narail and Jhenidah.

Nine of them were leaders or activists of political parties.

The 12 murdered in Khulna include Juba Dal leaders Didarul Alam and Kamaruzzaman Shaheen, killed at Hazi Mohsin

Road and at Sonadanga respectively. The rest are Kazi Kader Babu, killed at Khalishpur, Ibrahim of Tero Kheda, Amir Ali Gazi and Liakat Hossain of Paikgacha, Shamsur Rahman of Dumuria, Niranjana, Sultan Mir, Monir Hossain, Rumi and Salma Khatoon.

Those murdered in Bagerhat are BNP leader Azizul Huq, Jamaat leader Moulana Hamayetuddin, AL leader Bani Kanta, Enayet Ali, Noor

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Complaint case on sedition charge against Shahriar Kabir

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A complaint case on sedition charge against writer and columnist Shahriar Kabir was filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday.

The Second Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Muhammad Shafiqul Aziz Khan Siddiquis, directed the officer-in-charge ((OC) of Airport thana to take the complaint as a regular case and go for legal action against the accused after an investigation into the matter.

Complainant of the case Shahadat Hossain along with Dhaka Metropolitan PP Abdullah Mahmud

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Rejoinder and our reply

The Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) in a rejoinder to a The Daily Star report headlined "Ministry reviews BTTB's extra phone installation" published on December 5 said neither the BTTB chairman nor any official has ever been contacted by any reporters of The Daily Star regarding the news content quoting BTTB chairman and other anonymous officials.

Our reply: While our regular staff

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ACI Iftar

Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
23	9		5-15
24	10	5-06	5-16
25	11	5-06	5-16