

Indian media canard against Bangladesh

Delhi ready with terror files

HINDUSTAN TIMES, New Delhi

Security agencies have submitted a report to the government detailing the activities of north-eastern insurgent groups in Bangladesh. The report had been sought in the context of the ongoing controversy between India and Bangladesh over Dhaka's support for anti-Indian activities.

New Delhi intends to use the report, called for by Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani, for a "graduated response" - if and when necessary, it will confront Dhaka with the evidence it contains.

The report documents details of training camps for North-east insurgent outfits which function on Bangladeshi soil and get patronage and protection from both the Bangladesh Army and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

Most of the important camps are in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Habiganj, Mymensingh, Rangamati, Khagrachari, Bandarban, Sherpur, Moulvi Bazar, Netrakona and Sunamganj districts. Cox's Bazar in Chittagong district is used for the transshipment of weapons and explosives.

The camps are used as headquarters, training centres, safe havens and arms procurement and storage facilities. Home ministry reports suggest that for several years now Bangladesh has emerged as a "hub" for North-east terrorist activities.

The Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka, home ministry reports say, "serves as an important link for

the outfits which receive guidance and assistance from the ISI" as also from Bangladesh's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence.

One hundred and thirty camps have been identified by Indian intelligence agencies; 43 of them are for the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT). There are several "joint camps" that involve the NSCN (I-M), NSCN (Khaplang), United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), NLFT, All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), People's Liberation Army and United National Liberation Front.

For example, ATTF and Ulfa cadres and "probably" some Muslim terrorists operate from camps in Khagrachari and Satchari in Habiganj district. An NDFB-NSCN (I-M) training centre exists at Alikadam in Bandarban district.

While Ulfa has 24 camps, mostly in Dhaka, Sylhet, Khagrachari, Maulvi Bazar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), the NLFT's camps are located mostly in CHT and Khagrachari. The ATTF is active in Moulvi Bazar, Habiganj and Comilla.

Home ministry sources said the government not only had "incontrovertible proof" of the existence of the camps on Bangladeshi soil, but also the patronage that the insurgent outfits get from the Bangladesh Army and the BDR. "Much of the evidence in our possession is based on electronic and technical intelligence," the sources said.

BNP activist dies

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KMCH where the on-duty doctor declared him dead at about 4.00am yesterday, the sources added.

According to police, an army team picked up Tipu near the WAPDA colony at about 8.45pm Saturday. He was later taken to the army camp at the Khulna Divisional Stadium for interrogation.

Another source said Tipu was taken to the KMCH at 4.00am after he died at 1.00am. He fell sick after army interrogation, the source added. Family members said they were not aware of where and how Tipu died after arrest.

Abdul Gaffar Biswas was still at the KMCH for treatment yesterday after arrest on October 17.

His younger brother Razi Biswas and Ward Commissioner of the Khulna City Corporation (KCC) Anis Biswas were also arrested in the army drive. Razi is an aide to the ward commissioner.

Two more people died earlier in Khulna in custody after arrest by the army. Masum Biswas, 36, died on October 27 and Shariful Islam, 26, on November 24.

In the capital, the army recovered two more pistols on information of an arrested Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) ward commissioner yesterday. Khwaja Habibullah Habib, commissioner of ward No. 57, was arrested by the army Saturday night in the city, along with 11 others. Six firearms were seized from them.

Meanwhile, the joint forces arrested Babul Talukder, a bodyguard of the former Awami League (AL) lawmaker, Haji Mohammad Selim, in the city in the afternoon.

The army also arrested Zakir Hossain, an accused in over a dozen cases, four of them murder-related, at Basundhara. Zakir is also accused of killing Selim, a businessman, and Akhli, a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader.

Another army team arrested four accused for alleged involvement in the murder of an AL leader and former Karmachand Union parishad chairman in Sirajganj. The arrestees are Mohammad Shahin, Mohammad Selim, Abdur Rauf and Mohammad Palash.

An army team raided the Police Welfare Market at Paltan in the afternoon.

In Chittagong, the joint forces arrested two listed criminals and seized five firearms.

They also arrested Nawshad alias Shohag, an AL activist, in possession of a pistol in Lohagara.

Another team arrested Liton, a JCD cadre, in Mogadia at Mirer Sarai, in possession of a gun. Another three guns were recovered in Fatikchhari.

In Sylhet, eight people, including former district JCD president and vice-president of the JCD central committee, Mizanur Rahman, arrested. Syed Shafique Mahub, district general secretary of the JCD, was also picked up in the drive.

In Madaripur, two listed criminals were arrested in the army-led anticrime operation. They are Abdul Alim Matubbar of Shibchar and Azahar Hawlader, an alleged robber, of Rastini Madaripur.

The joint forces arrested 740 people in Madaripur in November. Of them, 580 people are wanted in different cases and the rest are either accused in on-trial cases or listed criminals.

In Sirajganj, troops and police arrested four listed criminals in the Sirajganj municipal area. The arrestees are Moiuuddin Khan Chinu, former general secretary of the district Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Kawsar Khan, BCL

activist, Hafizur Rahman Dablu and his brother Rashedul Hasan, both BNP activists.

In Pabna, the joint forces arrested five people, including a listed criminal, Korban Ali.

In Feni, the joint forces arrested five people, including three listed criminals Rafiqul Islam, Milon and Belayet.

In Gaibandha, the joint forces arrested 12 people in last two days and recovered a revolver from the house of one Omar Ali of Shalmara Union.

In Jessore, the army arrested 11 people, including a constable of Monirampur Police Station. Constable Momin were arrested along with two others Shahin and Arjun.

The army hauled up 153 people, including 20 listed criminals, in the last 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

They also seized 26 firearms including 14 pistols, two revolvers, three pipe-guns and four shotguns along with 381 bullets.

The army has so far arrested 7,768 people, including 1,797 listed, 5,740 non-listed and 231 suspected criminals since the anticrime drive started October 17.

They also seized 1,324 firearms along with 27,630 bullets during the same period. They handed over 5,500 people to the police.

Police headquarters in a press release yesterday said 1,297 criminals, five of them listed, were arrested countrywide in last 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday. And 12 firearms were seized. The Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested 215 people, including a listed criminal, said a press release.

Three killed in road mishap

UNB, Narayanganj

Three people were killed and seven others injured as a microbus rammmed into a stationary truck at Mogaipara in Sonarganga thana on Dhaka-Chittagong highway Saturday night.

Police said the accident took place at the dead of night leaving Nurul Amin, an employee of Bangladesh Military Academy, and two unidentified persons - an old man and a minor girl - died on the spot.

One of the injured, Anwara Begum, wife of Nurul Amin, was admitted to local hospital.

The microbus driver escaped unhurt and fled the scene.

Opsonin workers go on rampage in Barisal

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Workers of Opsonin Chemical Industries in the city became unruly and broke window panes and doors of the factory building yesterday following alleged discrimination in payment of Eid bonus.

They also assaulted two officials and locked up other officials inside their rooms for four hours.

They became angry at about noon when they saw that their Eid bonus and yearly increments were not being given as per commitment.

The situation calmed down when the officials assured of payments as per commitment.

'Indian army planned strike on Bangla terror camps'

ANN/STATSMAN, New Delhi

The army was set to strike at terrorist camps in Bangladesh five years ago, but the Centre did not accept the proposal. External affairs minister Yashwant Sinha said in Parliament recently that the ISI was active in Bangladesh. Five years ago, the situation was different. The ISI was not as active and the camps were mostly of terrorists who operated in India and moved to Bangladesh to seek refuge.

The Centre hesitated because Sheikh Hasina had just come to power in Bangladesh and a strike, it was felt, would weaken her position, and therefore, be politically "counter-productive". The camps were situated in eastern and south-eastern Bangladesh, in Sylhet and Chittagong hill tracts.

The army had planned to strike at the camps from Karinganj in Lower Assam, Tripura and Nagaland. Small detachments of infantry plus special forces commandos, if necessary, would have been used to clear the camps.

The camps were situated close to the border and deeper strikes would not have been necessary. It would have been a quick operation with soldiers, quickly moving in, destroying the camps and moving out.

But the government felt that security forces in Bangladesh were not entirely with Sheikh Hasina.

A substantial number of terrorist camps were operating in Bangladesh at that time. Arms for them were mostly being purchased in Bangkok and shipped in trawlers and fishing boats to the ports of Cox's Bazar and Chalna. The weapons were mostly 'war surplus' from Cambodia. They were unloaded in these areas - mostly forested - and moved to the camps.

In the mid-1990s, a number of terrorist groups were very active in the North-east. Running away from Indian security forces, they sought refuge in Bangladesh and Bhutan. There were plans to strike at Ulfa camps in Bhutan, but the proposals were turned down. Many of the camps are still active today.

PIO says

FROM PAGE 12 operation.

He told reporters that some 102 committees had been formed to verify the documents on issuance of gun licences to people as well as to arms dealers and shooting clubs.

Colonel Nazrul Islam of ISPR and AIG of police Hasan Mahmud Khandaker were present at the briefing.

Ex-PSC chief

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The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) filed the case against the accused on December 11 last year.

The investigation officer of the case submitted a charge sheet against the five on June 24 showing 14 people as prosecution witnesses.

All the five accused now on bail, were present in the court during the hearing.

Special public prosecutor (PP) Fazlur Rahman Khan appeared for the state while Advocate Sahara Khatun and Habibur Rahman for the accused.

Viqarunnisa

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headed by Professor Monirul Huq, a UGC member, revealed that the university did not have an FDR of Tk 5 crore and five acres of land of its own.

The committee also said the Viqarunnisa University Foundation registered under the Joint Stock Company Act was abolished when one of its life members died and five others resigned. The foundation decided to return all assets and land to the VNSC.

The committee also said the former VNSC principal Hamida Ali gave five acres of land of the VNSC to the university and Tk 5 crore in violation of rules. The seed of the dispute leading to closure of the university was sowed when she retired.

Meanwhile, guardians of the students condemned the cancellation of the permission. "It is like killing the academic lives of 133 students," said Mohammad Nazmul Huq, a guardian.

Huq in a statement on behalf of the guardians said students enrolled at the university for a bright and prospective future and passed three semesters.

"How could the government cancel the permission of a university after its three semesters?" he asked.

Earlier, the guardians sought prime ministerial intervention to save the academic career of their children.

The students and their guardians will stage a fast unto death after the Eid-ul-Fitr, he said.

Zakat stampede kills 37

FROM PAGE 1 distribution. But increasing pressure of the crowd forced the authorities to open the gate early in the morning without ensuring proper police security.

The additional superintendent of police of Gaibandha told The Daily Star that the donor had asked for deployment of police at the mill premises for the distribution. But the fatal incident occurred before police were stationed, he added.

The owner of the Nahid Cotton Mills, Mohammed Abdul Wahid, had decided to disburse Zakat cloths among the destitute and the poor of the areas like in previous years. On his behalf, his elder brother Ranju this time arranged the programme.

Since Saturday evening, thousands of destitute from far-flung areas thronged the residence of Wahid at Godown road. However, the donor selected the nearby abandoned godown of the closed down Adamjee Jute Mills purchasing centre as the venue.

Police took gatekeeper Noazuddin and Ranju into custody

Four in race

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with ASHK Sadique heading the AL election commission, the two other members are advocate Abdul Hamid and Shudangshu Shekhar Haldar.

Sources pointed out that for the first time since 1981 the AL will witness formation of a new central committee through vote by grassroots level councillors. Since 1981, all party councillors in the previous councils in 1983, 1987, 1992, and 1997 delegated power to the party chief Hasina to choose other leaders, including the party general secretary.

AL rank and file considers the major procedural change as a milestone in the party's pursuit for practising democracy within the party. They believe the debacle in last year's general election created the grounds for the new thinking.

The process of democratisation within the AL began earlier this year when the party succeeded in electing new leaders for its student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), through direct vote by student councillors from across the country.

Meanwhile, as the party failed to complete holding councils of its



A signature pre-Eid traffic snarl-up near the Chandni Chawk market in the city yesterday, with motorised vehicles negotiating their way through unruly rickshaws.

PHOTO: STAR

Odhikar report

FROM PAGE 1 during November and December in 2000, the report further says.

As many as 18 Bangladeshi citizens died only in September last year and 200 people were injured in March last year -- the highest figures for a single month -- at the hands of the BSF and Indian criminals, the report adds.

Over the past two years, incidents of killing of Bangladeshi citizens took place in every month except in November 2000.

Odhikar noted that the BSF attack on Bangladeshi citizens in the frontier areas is a regular phenomenon. In most cases, they are instigating, killing and abducting the civilians.

Some Indian criminals, encouraged and assisted directly or otherwise by the BSF, are leading attacks in the border villages. They are killing and abducting citizens, trafficking women and children out of the country, and looting cattle and crops.

The report points out that even when crossing the border complying with all legal procedures, Bangladeshi citizens become victims of BSF attacks in clear violation of international laws.

Second ODI today

FROM PAGE 1 National Stadium throughout the day-night encounter, scheduled for a 1:30pm start.

Satellite channel ESPN and Bangladesh Television will telecast the match live while Bangladesh Betar will provide ball-by-ball commentary.

Meanwhile, both teams had a full practice session under lights at the big bowl last evening after a one-and-a-half-day break since their return from the port city on Saturday morning.

Bangladesh skipper Khaled Mashud was in a confident mood after his team's gritty performance in the first match.

"Our fielding was good. Although our bowlers were taken to task at the death and the top-order batsmen struggled against the new ball, there were quite a few positives. And we hope not to make the same mistakes," he told reporters before the practice session.

Mashud did not share chief selector Alul Islam's idea of a possible change in the side.

"I do not think Al-Shahriar played

Foreign journalists

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The two Channel-4 journalists and their local guide Pricilla will be produced before the court today on expiry of their five-day remand and the law enforcers may seek further remand, police sources said.

Meanwhile, the police interrogated freelance journalist Saleem Samad at the DB headquarters for the second day yesterday.

The police, however, remained tight-lipped even after the expiry of their remand. Despite repeated requests, none of the interrogators made any comments on the arrested persons.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has accused the authorities in Bangladesh of fuelling "suspicion and mistrust" of journalists, after two foreign television crew were arrested on the border with India.

The IFJ says that detained media staff working for Britain's Channel-4 TV must be released immediately. "The detention of these journalists is a scandalous assault on press freedom and has no justification

Real estate

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exchange of the land, he said.

According to him, the developers played a vital role in solving the housing problem in the country as around 45,000 flats were constructed in last one decade.

But the private housing companies are suffering huge losses because of price and demand slumps, Seraj said.

whatsoever," said Aidan White, IFJ General Secretary.

"This is an unacceptable violation of the right to report," said Aidan White, "these journalists were in Bangladesh on a professional mission. Their arrest will only fuel suspicion and mistrust of media and journalists, which is already being stirred up by reactionary groups within the country."

The IFJ responded to an appeal from Channel 4 which is seeking international support for their crew who were arrested in Bangladesh.

Two burned to death?

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Boalita thana Shahidul Haq said.

Asked why an abduction case was recorded instead of a murder case, he said this was done as there was no witness to the incident.

Meanwhile, some local people and police sources said that on November 27, Kalu (Siddique's brother and a worker at the brick kiln), while working at the site found sandals, lamps, tiffin-boxes and water bottles used by the two victims.

"We hope that he will be fit for the Tests," said Jacobs.

Asked whether there would be any change in the team, he said they would decide that in the morning.

He also saw stains of blood on the ground and two blood-stained gamchhas (towels) of the victims near chimneys of the kiln.

Police seized these articles as evidences.

Some of the workers informed a group of newsmen that on Wednesday morning, Anar scuffled with his family members over disappearance of the two persons and shouted that they fled the brick kiln after clashes with other workers.

But there was no incident of clash at the kiln during last one week, the workers said.

It is alleged that Anar and his

brothers Majdul, Khairul, Makbul and Aynul had threatened the victims' family to withdraw the cases.

Sources in the victims' families said that Siddique took Tk 12,000 from Anar for supplying 12 labourers, but he supplied nine labourers.

Police said they are yet to find out the reasons behind the murders.

"The murder could be a sequel to a feud between Anar and Siddique over supply of three more labourers... But the matter is still under investigation," said a police officer.

The OC of Boalita thana said the case is being investigated with much importance.

Agrani Bank

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But the reply from the Agrani executives was in the negative. Also, they could not give any reason why this had not been done.

The governor also noted that while remittance has increased this year, Agrani's performance in this regard was also dismal. Its remittance target was Tk 1,100 crore, but only Tk 700 crore could it bring in.

Arms licence flaws

FROM PAGE 1 tory (malkhana) of the deputy commissioner (DC) and five for arms dealers and shooting clubs.

There are 150 arms dealers and 70 shooting clubs in the country, he said.

Each committee for Dhaka consists of five members -- a senior assistant secretary as convener and one representative from the DC office, Special Branch of Police, Income Tax Department and DGI or NSI (National Security Intelligence) or AFD (Armed Forces Division) each. Therefore, 135 officials will engage in the 27 Dhaka committees.

But the committees for all other districts, including Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet, comprise three members: additional deputy commissioner as convener, one representative from the Office of Superintendent of Police or Police Commissioner (rank not below additional police super) and one representative from the NSI.

Nine committees have been formed for Chittagong, arms dealers

and shooting clubs, four for Khulna, two for Rajshahi, and 60 for the rest of the districts.

Alam said the arms used for security reasons by state-owned commercial banks and financial institutions were not meant for surrender.

Listing firearms is a difficult task because some licences were issued in the British and Pakistan rules, he said.

The government has missed out on several thousand arms as they were issued against fake addresses.

The government will go for legal action against those who did not deposit arms before expiry of the deadline.

In reply to a question, Alam said the arms would be returned to those who truly need arms, but the committees would examine if they need arms at all.

The government has received lists of deposited arms and ammunition from 34 districts and looks forward to receiving the rest soon, he said.