

7 M-79 rifles, 12 guns

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The seized arms included anti-tank mines, anti-personnel mines, ingredients to make explosives, M-16, M-79 and AK-47 rifles.

The operations by the joint forces however often fail to meet their desired ends due to the dual role of the informants, sources allege.

On September 21 last year, the BDR seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition in Thanchi Bolpara area but could not arrest the operatives.

An army team in a raid on Luline Para area seized huge arms but again could not arrest the criminals. They have so far arrested only two persons.

The first successful operation was conducted on August 26 at Luline Purnabas Para under Rorongchhari Upazila.

The security forces seized an M-16 rifle, 200 rifle

bullets, two grenade launchers and 40 grenades, a locally made gun, a rocket launcher, three bullets, two digital walkie-talkie, an AK-47 rifle with 127 bullets, a foreign-made pistol and a huge quantity of medicine.

The following day, the BDR in a drive in Techri area of Naikongchhari Upazila seized a .303 rifle, 73 bullets, a .12 bore shot gun, three cartridges and three sets of army uniforms.

Tipped off, the paramilitary forces conducted a drive on September 18 in Dochri Hatir Matha area of the Upazila and retrieved 310 grenades, five coiled electric cables, three solar

panels, 130 kilogram of plastic exposure, five packets of gun power, a packet of low-power explosives and two acid containers.

The seizure also included 14 chemical containers, a packet of white potash, 10 masks, 226 grenades, a coiled safety fuse insulator, a shotgun, a binocular, 61 bullets of M-16 rifles, 11 telephone circuits, a set of antenna and 40 battery connectors.

The BDR seized four revolvers, seven bullets, a small gun, a telescope with carrier, three khaki belts, three camp carriages and huge quantity of crops from Kulapungchhara area of Thanchi Upazila on September 21.

They retrieved a homemade single barrel gun, 45 cartridges, a kilogram of lead and two machetes from a hill area, five kilometres away from Lemuchhri BDR camp, on October 20.

The paramilitary forces on November 5 seized two AK-47 rifles, 18 magazines, 1,005 bullets, a Chinese 7.62mm pistol with 14 bullets and two magazines and 80 cartridges of .22 bore gun from Dochri Upazila.

On December 30, 32 anti-tank mines, seven anti-personnel mines, six rocket launchers, 10 charged rocket launcher cell, a GF bomb and 18 charged GF bombs were retrieved from Lemuchhri Para on October 20.

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Altaf blames

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The attackers of the internationally reputed lawyer on his way to attend a public meeting at Rangamati in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

The home minister said armed opposition activists accompanying Dr Kamal swooped on workers of the Sama Odhikar Andolok (Equal Rights Movement) opposed to the CHT Peace Treaty.

"The Sama Odhikar Andolok was enforcing a peaceful blockade programme demanding annulment of the so-called CHT Peace Treaty and resignation of (PCJSS leader) Santu Larma. On the other hand, Santu has been enforcing separate programmes demanding implementation of the peace treaty. Amid such a volatile situation, Gono Forum leader Dr Kamal with a large motorcade carrying anti-government activists tried to get past the blockade. As the general public resisted them, the armed opposition activists attacked them," Altaf said in his statement.

He also claimed that neither the government nor the ruling party had any link with the incident, adding that an investigation was underway. Lawmaker Kader Siddiqui of Krishak Sramik Janata League was so annoyed by the home minister's statement that he immediately staged a walkout in protest after terming the statement untrue.

"This is untrue. Dr Kamal was going there (Rangamati) in a single car and there was no motorcade. I am walking out in protest."

Earlier, formulating his point of order, Kader Siddiqui said miscreants attacked Dr Kamal and damaged his car on his way to Rangamati yesterday morning and that when he met Kamal at the Chittagong Press Club yesterday afternoon, the Gono Forum leader was weeping at the insult and violence meted out to him.

Siddiqui said a prime ministerial spokesperson contacted him over phone inquiring about Dr Kamal and told him (Siddiqui) that the prime minister had summoned the home minister and asked him to take immediate action regarding the attack on Dr Kamal.

At this point, BNP's Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, chairman of the CHT Development Board who allegedly instigated the attack on Dr Kamal, rushed towards the home minister and told him something as Siddiqui and the Speaker were arguing over the issue's merit as a point of order.

Later, Siddiqui also threatened to resign from the House "if the government failed to inform the parliament what actions were being taken against Dr Kamal's attackers."

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia was also present in the House but did not take the floor.

PM orders

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Hossain.

He felt that adequate steps should have been taken to ensure safety of Kamal Hossain as his programme was announced earlier.

The leaders expressed dissatisfaction that the authorities concerned did not take necessary security measures even after the 'Sama Odhikar Andolok' threatened to resist Kamal's visit to Rangamati.

U-19 WC Cricket

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to other contenders for the world title with emphatic wins.

Bangladesh, placed in Plate Group 2, reduced Canada to 36 for five and the North Americans recovered to 136 all out in 37.2 overs at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

The home side were unsettled by

off-spinner Shaheen Khan who threatened to run through the Bangladesh batting with figures of five for 29. But Khan received little support from the other bowlers and the hosts reached the target in 34.5 overs.

England put on a terrific batting show against New Zealand in a Super League Group B encounter by amassing 306 for two with skipper Alastair Cook and number four Samit Patel notching hundreds.

The young Black Caps were never in the chase under lights at the Bangabandhu National Stadium and lost their last wicket on 209.

Group B's other fixture, played at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan, saw Pakistan thrash Zimbabwe by nine wickets.

After dismissing Zimbabwe for 141, captain Khalid Latif cracked 84 not out as Pakistan reached 143 in 30 overs.

In another Plate fixture at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong, Uganda replied with 209 to Ireland's 329 for nine.

A BN

secretary of the SKSD, echoed Jalli's view, saying, "The oust-government movement has to be waged with the specific objective to bring a culture of healthy politics against the present trend of criminal activities, corruption, looting and communalism."

Both leaders said there would be more talks on the details of the planned anti-government movement on a common platform.

The AL's memorandum will protest recent police torture on Ansullah Master MP during an AL-sponsored hartal as well as the 'false' cases under the Speedy Trial Act against some of its MPs, including Mirza Azam and ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury.

The memorandum will also express the party's grievance over non-realisation of three-point demand that the AL made long ago as a precondition to its return to parliament, which it has been boycotting since June 25 last year.

Sharon's unilateral disengagement plan involves, among other things, an evacuation from 17 of the Gaza Strip's 21 Jewish settlements, possibly by this summer, and from isolated West Bank settlements.

Attack on Dr Kamal

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dropping the visit to Rangamati where he was supposed to address a rally of pro-peace Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS).

Gano Forum President Member Pankaj Bhattacharya, CPB central leader Khaledi Kiron Talukder, Adibas Adhikar Andolok Convener Professor Mesbah Kamal and Dhaka University teachers professor Gobinda Chakrabarty and Akhtar Sobhan Masrur also accompanied Dr Kamal in the journey.

The attack came on the second day of a three-day road blockade enforced by the Adhikar Andolok, an outfit of Bangladeshi settlers in the CHT agitating for the realisation of its nine-point demand including scrap of the peace pact and removal of PCJSS chief Jotirindra Bodhipriya Larma from the chairmanship of CHT regional council.

The PCJSS, a political outfit of the indigenous people of the CHT, signed the landmark peace pact with the government in 1997 that ended two decades of bloody bush war in the highlands.

"The goons came close to our microbuses, peered inside and attacked us after being confirmed about our identities," he said.

"The attack was launched neither to vandalise our vehicles nor to resist us from going to Rangamati, but to kill us."

Dr Kamal said the incident occurred at around 10:00am when the motorcade reached the Rubber Garden area, about 3 kilometres off Raazan upazila headquarters.

"The miscreants blocked our way with logs, searched our vehicles and then carried out the attack with sticks and bricks amid shouts and use of filthy words."

"They tried to block our return to Chittagong in the same way. But because of our driver's presence of mind we could escape the terrorists and save our lives," he said.

At a press conference on February 15, the Adhikar Andolok declared Dr Kamal, Larma, Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapani Dewan and Manik Lal Dewan 'unwarranted' in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and accused Dr Kamal of fueling incitements against Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty.

WAVE OF PROTESTS

The attack on the motorcade of Dr Kamal sparked a wave of protests across the country, especially in Chittagong and Rangamati districts.

The PCJSS called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in Rangamati district for today and Chittagong Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury issued a seven-day ultimatum to the government demanding immediate arrest and trial of the guilty.

"If the demands are not met within the deadline, we'll call a hartal," he said, adding that a hurriedly called rally at the Shaheed Minar in the port city.

The Gano Forum and a range of other political organisations brought out protest processions or condemned the attack.

POLICE INACTION

Talking to journalists in Chittagong, Dr Kamal criticised the local administration for failing to ensure their security.

"I had talked to the deputy commissioner (DC) and superintendent of police (SP) of Chittagong yesterday (Sunday). They assured us of giving police protection after 10:00am, but we did not find any policeman around when we came under the attack," he alleged.

Dr Kamal said he was planning to

set up a power plant based on Shahbazpur gas field in Bholia in the next one and a half years and also install gas pipeline in Bogra, Parliament was told yesterday.

Responding to a volley of questions on the reserve of natural gas and its supply to different regions, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosarraf Hossain said the government has signed production-sharing contracts with International Oil Companies (IOC) for drilling and exploration of gas in promising areas.

At present, the country's proven gas reserve is 15 TCF while the probable reserve (50:50 chance) is 41 TCF.

Replies to a supplementary of Syed Abdul Majeed Taher (Jamaat-e-Islami), the state minister said Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (Bapex) has taken its own initiative to drill five to six fields, including one at Fenchugan.

Besides, drilling will be conducted at Larma and Debbari under block-9 in Comilla, he said expressing the hope that gas will be found in one of them.

Cain company will make seismic

study in blocks-5 and 10, he said, adding that such study will also be carried out near Sangu and in Cox's Bazar.

Mosarraf also informed that the government had signed a contract with a Canadian company for drilling in Sylhet, Noakhali and Feni districts.

The government plans to set up a power plant based on Shahbazpur gas field in Bholia in the next one and a half years and also install gas pipeline in Bogra, Parliament was told yesterday.

Unless the demands are met forthwith, Larma said his organisation will continue its vigorous agitation programmes including road blockades after celebration of the Adibasis (indigenous) New Year and SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examinations.

PCJSS leaders also condemned yesterday's attack on the motorcade of Dr Kamal Hossain, president of Gono Forum, who was on his way to Rangamati from Chittagong to attend the public meeting of the main indigenous organisation.

Tourists

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also lead an 11-member Indian team at the opening ceremony, sources said.

Bangladesh Naval Cadet Core and NGO activists will assist SDF officials and employees during the week-long tiger counting programme, SDF officials said.

According to a SDF report in 1993, tiger population in Bangladesh side of the Sundarbans forest was about 400.

A recent SDF survey report revealed on average 25 people die from tiger attacks annually and 20 tigers have been killed during the last five years.

The ministry also formed five monitoring and supervising committees for the enumeration project in 55 divisions of the mangrove forest, sources said.

A five-member team from Bangladesh joined a tiger enumeration programme in the Indian part of the 5,800 square km Sundarbans in January, they added.

Meanwhile, the city BNP has started hectic preparations to

ensure a massive gathering at the Basabro rally and issued instructions to all its units in Motijheel-Khilgaon constituency. Minister for Housing and Public Works Mirza Abbas, who is MP from the constituency, is overseeing the preparations.

Party sources pointed out that all the eight MPs in the capital are in a competition to stage a massive showdown in their respective areas.

AL rejects US envoy's

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The AL leadership also told the US ambassador the government obstructed the party's International Mother Language Day programmes and beat up its leaders, lawmakers and workers during the recent peaceful

harts.

AL leaders present included Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta, SAMS Kibria, Sajeda Chowdhury, Motia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Kazi Zafarullah, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Syed Abul Hossain.

Israel

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the government with a fait accompli," MP Arieel Eldad, who sits on Sharon's ruling coalition, charged on the radio.

He threatened to vote with the opposition who were to present three censure motions against the later Monday.

He mentioned the government

met the Jatiya Party's (Ershad)

demands that included apology from the communications minister in parliament. "But they (government)

are totally indifferent to our demands and it shows their double standard."

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