

Pakistan 'lost' Laden trail

BBC ONLINE

Pakistani forces had their best chance of capturing Osama bin Laden last year, but they lost the trail, President Pervez Musharraf has told the BBC.

Musharraf said the intelligence services had their strongest indication about the al-Qaeda leader's whereabouts eight to 10 months back," he said.

"But after that, this is such a game, this intelligence, that they escape. They can move and then you lose contact."

Bin Laden's group is blamed for thousands of deaths in the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US and other attacks around the world.

The Pakistani army has faced its strongest resistance in its operations against al-Qaeda in the restive border regions of North and South Waziristan.

President Musharraf said he was sure Pakistan's most wanted militant, Abdullah Mehsud, was killed in North Waziristan several days ago.

The death has yet to be confirmed, he said, adding that the militant's death would reduce resistance to the army's presence.

Mehsud - whose real name is Noor Alam - is a Pashtun, the same ethnic group as the Taleban.

In December, Pakistani authorities offered a five million rupee (\$84,000; £44,000) reward for help in the arrest of Mehsud.

The one-legged Mehsud, a former prisoner at the US military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, was accused of masterminding the kidnab of two Chinese engineers last October.

British 'cannibal' admits to eating friend's brain after frying

AFP, London

A convicted killer with serious psychiatric problems and a confessed penchant for cannibalism was given two life sentences yesterday for killing two people, including an old friend whose brain he cooked up in a frying pan and ate.

The judge sentencing Peter Bryan at London's Old Bailey court said his conviction would leave no possibility of early release.

The 35-year-old, characterized by expert witnesses as a paranoid schizophrenic, has already served seven years in a high-security psychiatric hospital for beating to death a 20-year-old store assistant with a hammer in 1993. He was released in 2001.

In February 2004, while living in a community mental health facility in east London, Bryan went to visit a friend, Brian Cherry, 43, at home in nearby Walthamstow.

Neighbors heard screams from the home and alerted police, who discovered Bryan had killed his friend and was cooking the dismembered body and brains in a frying pan.

Prosecutor Aftab Jafferjee said Bryan had inflicted more than 24 blows to Cherry's head, chopped him up with the aid of kitchen knives and had already eaten some of the man's brain cooked in butter by the time police arrived.

Bryan, who appeared in court in a black suit surrounded by four mental health workers and a court officer, admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility.

Prosecutors dropped calls for a murder conviction on the weight of psychiatric evidence.

Reading out the sentence, Judge Giles Forrester told Bryan he had gotten a "thrill and a feeling of power when you ate flesh".

"The violence on each occasion was extreme and unpredictable, accompanied by bizarre and sexual

Govt ditches demand

FROM PAGE 1 party' and came down on it heavily for what he said was using the media to destroy the country's image.

Newspapers are a major player in a democracy, he noted, adding, "Awami League leaders are now using the negative headlines of the newspapers as a weapon to destroy the country's image."

Saifur urged newspapers to make constructive criticism of the government and to avoid anything that might harm the greater interest of the nation, saying, "I'll be of no benefit to destroy the image of the country, rather will mean loss for us all."

BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said AL has to come to parliament to bring changes in the existing provisions of the non-party caretaker government.

"Holding roundtables outside parliament on the issue will not bring any positive result to this end, as parliament is the right place to bring any amendments to the existing caretaker government system," Bhuiyan told the Jatiya Sangsad (JS).

The law minister's criticism of the opposition demand was more pointed. Barrister Moudud Ahmed said, "Caretaker government is a settled issue and one of the basics of the constitution," and blamed the opposition for trying to unsettle the case and creating unrest in the

Home secy's contract ends today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is still undecided about appointing a new secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs while the contract of the incumbent secretary expires today.

However, Prime Minister's Office sources said the appointment of a new home secretary may be made today.

Highly placed sources said the government has decided not to further extend the contract of Home Secretary Muhammad Omar Farooq as he was given contract for three consecutive terms.

They said that the government is considering names of three to four secretaries for appointment as secretary of the home ministry. Among them are Secretary of the Planning Division Akhter Hossain Khan and Secretary of the Ministry of Communications Shafiqul Islam.

Shafiqul Islam is currently serving on contract.

Pakistan to free of 589 Indian prisoners

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan issued release orders yesterday for 589 Indian prisoners as a gesture of goodwill towards New Delhi, an official statement said.

President Pervez Musharraf told Amarinder Singh, the visiting chief minister of Punjab, that Pakistan had initiated the process to release Indian civilians and fishermen in Pakistan whose nationality has been confirmed.

"India has so far confirmed the national status of 529 fishermen and 60 civilian prisoners detained in Pakistan," a Pakistani Foreign Ministry statement said.

"The Ministry of Interior has today issued the release order concerning these prisoners and they would be handed over to the Indian authorities shortly," it said.

Pakistan and India frequently arrest illegal entrants, including fishermen who trespass in each other's waters, but have agreed prisoner releases as goodwill gestures after relaunching a peace process last year.

News of the release orders comes as New Delhi prepares to host Musharraf for a cricket series between the two countries, which have fought three wars since independence in 1947 and went to the brink of a fourth in 2002.

Judgement

FROM PAGE 16 Earlier, Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud and Advocate Mahbube Alam finished their submission for the defendants -- editors, publishers and reporters of the Prothom Alo and the Bhorer Kagoj.

The Prothom Alo and the Bhorer Kagoj in their separate reports on October 30 last year said that Additional Judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee's LLB examination results were allegedly tampered with.

The judge's father Mohammad Faiz filed a contempt petition on November 8 against Prothom Alo Editor Matir Rahman, Publisher Mahfuz Anam and reporters Ekramul Haque Bulbul and Masud Milad, and Bhorer Kagoj Editor Abed Khan, Publisher Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Reporter Shamaresh Baidya.

Saifur's wrong

FROM PAGE 1 was between Tk 5.76 and Tk 6.49 persher (one-seventeenth less than a kilogram).

The price listing of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (Cab) puts that price at Tk 18 on an average for February last.

Partha gets

FROM PAGE 1 Chowdhury granted the bail following a petition submitted on November 9 last year.

Blast (Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust) moved the bail petition and the HC on December 11, 2004, issued a rule on the government to explain why Partha would not be freed on bail.

Eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain moved for Partha's bail yesterday.

The court granted Partha bail till disposal of the email threat case filed against him.

In the other case, Partha was granted bail until police submit their report.

Nizamul Haq, barister Sara Hossain and barrister Tanjib-ul Alam assisted Dr Kamal.

Deputy Attorney General Abdur Rouf and Assistant Attorney General Alamgir Kabir moved for the state.

Unknown people sent an email to The Daily Prothom Alo on August 23 last year, threatening to kill AL President Sheikh Hasina.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested Partha from his Elephant Road house on August 26 last year and produced him before the court on August 30, a day after CID filed a case regarding the email threat.

Nephew admits killing

FROM PAGE 16

Aminul, nephew of Dr Afsanuzzaman of Nutrition Science Institute at Dhanmondi, made the statement to Metropolitan Magistrate Nani Gopal Biswas under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

On that fatal day at noon, Nazneen, wife of Afsanuzzaman, saw Aminul and Parvin in a compromising situation. Angered, Nazneen scolded him for such immoral act and negligence to studies, and beat him up with a broom, he told the magistrate.

Aminul got carried away with an impulse to avenge what he said was the insult and went to Nazneen's bedroom at around 8:00pm that night and butchered her with a boti (a kitchen machete).

He then chopped Parvin to death with the boti to do away with the only witness to his crime, he said.

Afterwards, he changed his

bloodstained clothes and left for Bogra taking Nazneen' cell-phone, some cash and valuables.

Terminng such activities a 'breach' of the border treaty, the BDR urged the Indian side to stop this.

Firing on and killing of innocent and unarmed Bangladeshi people by the BSF and Indian nationals also came up at the meeting.

The other issues raised by the BDR included BSF camps on the border, security, obstruction to development work on the Bangladesh side by the BSF, and smuggling of arms and ammunition and drugs.

Deputy Director General of BDR Brigadier General SM Golam Rabbani leads the eight-member BDR team at the talks being held at BSF Salbagan Headquarters. IG of BSF for Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland Shri SC Srivastava is leading the 14-member Indian team.

The BDR raised the issues at the meeting that began at 9:00am and continued till 4:00pm. The BSF is likely to come up with its points today, said a top BDR official.

"The BSF started erecting barbed wire fences in 1980 but we never resisted it as they were constructing it in their territory. This time we are resisting it because they are doing this within 150 yards of the no man's land," said the official, wishing not to be named.

Ramgarh BDNEWS reports: BSF yesterday continued its reinforcement and was piling up huge quantity of construction materials to erect barbed wire fences opposite Ramgarh border in Khagrachhari.

BDR and local sources said BSF deployed a large number of its personnel and amassed heavy weapons at Pancharampara, Kashibari, Adharmanik, Tabalchhari and Taindong border points.

Both the sides declared a red alert on the borders for the last 20 days.

People of the area continued to flee their houses as BDR-BSF exchanged fire 15 times during this period.

Our staff correspondent in Khulna adds: Fresh deployment of BSF personnel equipped with heavy arms at all the camps opposite Benapole and other border points in Jessore and Jhenidha has created panic among people of the areas.

A dawn-todusk curfew has been imposed on the Indian side, indicating border tension is mounting, reports received here said.

BSF men boarding river vessels are also intruding into Bangladesh territory.

Fun fire

FROM PAGE 16 Army Camp, targeted his colleague out of fun and suddenly pressed the trigger, injuring Delwar.

Other army personnel of the camp rescued Delwar Hossain hearing the sound of fire.

A reliable source said on condition of anonymity, the SMG actually belonged to Sergeant Abdul Mannan. Investigation is going on regarding how the firearm of a senior officer went to a junior personnel.

Flats to get

FROM PAGE 16 January 2003 to March 2005.

Per ton prices of 60 grade and 40 grade rod were Tk 22,000 and 20,000 in June 2003 but it soared up to Tk 41,000 and 38,000 by March 2005 and a bag of cement that sold at Tk191 in June 2003 now costs Tk 270, he said.

Rehab leaders called upon the National Board of Revenue, commerce and finance ministries and authorities concerned to intervene to keep the prices of building materials at a reasonable level.

The price of readymade flats needs to be reviewed every three months, they said.

Rehab Senior Vice-president MA Awal, General Secretary Mahmudul Hasan and Joint Secretary Tanvirul Haq Probal were present at the press conference.

Gas supply

FROM PAGE 1 the country. This also resulted in lower power generation in the gas-fired power plants.

Power load shedding hovers around 600 mw to 900 mw on week-days.

Meanwhile, Canadian Gas Field Niko Resources, which developed an abandoned gas field in Fenil last year through a joint venture agreement with Bapex, recently threatened Petrobangla with stoppage of gas supplies unless it is paid all arrears.

Niko got into the deal bypassing any competition and conventional practices of the government by using political lobbyists. Consequently, it had no gas sales agreement with Petrobangla. In the face of supply shortfall, Petrobangla started taking Niko's gas a few months back without fixing any price or concluding a deal.

Niko now claims it has about \$5 million in outstanding arrears. It is supplying 40 mmcfcd gas.

Petrobangla sources said Niko has withdrawn its threat as Petrobangla warned of 'stern action' against it in public interest. Petrobangla however paid it about \$2 million following the threat.

BDR opposes

FROM PAGE 1

India's setting up of pump houses and pumping out water from the common rivers of the two countries.

Terminng such activities a 'breach' of the border treaty, the BDR urged the Indian side to stop this.

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2 senior bank staff

FROM PAGE 16 of Dhaka Metal Steel Works (Pvt.) Limited Shahidul Islam alias Nilu, company officials Harun-or-Rashid and Mohammad Firoz.

Judge Rezaul Karim Khan of the Special Court for Dhaka Division pronounced the verdict.

Of the convicts, Sirajuddin, Humayun and Firoz were present in the court during the delivery of the judgement while Nilu and Harun were tried in absentia.

The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the date of their arrest or surrender, the court said.

In the case filed with Gulshan Police Station, it was alleged that Shahidul, Harun and Firoz proposed to buy 200 tons of iron rods from Golam Kibria Chowdhury, managing director of Mobarak Re-Rolling Mills Ltd. in August 1988. They made a contract to pay the money through letters of credit (LC) of the bank against a guarantee of Tk 30 lakh from the Sonali Bank Gulshan Local branch.

When Kibria supplied the materials and went to the bank on August 1 1988, he found the letters of credit to be forged. Kibria came to learn that the three in connivance with the two bank officials committed the offence.

Golam Kibria filed a case against Shahid and two others on August 5

Rice kicks off Asia trip

FROM PAGE 16 by senior Indian foreign ministry officials when she arrived around 7:00 pm (1330 GMT).

She will have a full working day in the Indian capital today when she meets Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Foreign Minister Natwar Singh before flying off to Islamabad in the evening.

She said increased military spending by Beijing was a concern because it comes at a time when there was growing tension between China and Taiwan.

Rice also criticised Beijing for passing a new law Monday that gives its military the legal basis to attack Taiwan if the island moves towards independence.

"Certainly, the military spending is concerning because it is taking place at a time when the cross-Strait issue (with Taiwan) is not still resolved," Rice told reporters on her plane.

China's rubber-stamp parliament approved Monday a 12.6 percent increase in military spending this year to 244.65 billion yuan (29.5 billion dollars).

"The anti-secession law is not helpful in reducing cross strait tensions," she said.

The legislation is expected to be raised during Rice's stay in China, which comes at the end of a tour that will also take her to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Japan and South Korea.

The secretary of state is due to address a joint news conference with her Indian counterpart after their talks, Indian foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said in Delhi Tuesday.

Sarna said bilateral trade, economic and security relations, the situation in Nepal, Bangladesh and the India-Pakistan peace process, ongoing cooperation in Afghanistan, developments in Iraq and United Nation reforms are some of the issues expected to come up for discussion.

Asked if India would take up the issue of proposed sales of arms to Pakistan by the United States, Sarna said the US was "well aware of our concerns".

He said India and the United States had been in close touch and recently "worked together in the UN on coordinating our approach on Nepal".

India and the United States were the first to pull their envoys out of Nepal after King Gyanendra sacked the Sher Bahadur Deuba government in February. India and Britain have suspended arm sales to Nepal while Washington has warned it will follow suit unless the king restores multiparty democracy in the Himalayan outpost.

In Islamabad, Rice will hold talks with her counterpart Khurshid Kasuri and meet President Pervez Musharraf, Pakistani foreign office spokesman Jalli Abbas Jilani said.

Speaking of her trip to Inia's neighbour, Rice said, "We fully expect President Musharraf to be committed to a democratic path for Pakistan."

Pakistan has been a staunch ally of US President George W. Bush since the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington.

On Thursday, Rice will make a short trip to the Afghan capital Kabul and return the same day, leaving Islamabad Friday after meeting Kasuri, Jilani said.

"Besides discussing bilateral relations, we would also be discussing the regional situation," he added.

However, he did not say if Rice would make any announcement about Pakistan's request to buy more F-16 fighter jets from the US. India strongly opposes the sale.

The Wall Street Journal reported yesterday that on her swing through South Asia Rice is expected to signal US willingness to sell F-16s to both Pakistan and India.

The paper, citing US government sources, said the US could sell Pakistan about two dozen jets while India could buy as many as 125.

Sales of the fighter jets, it said, would be a major policy shift for

the same year and the investigation officer pressed charges against the two bank officials and four others on June 26, 1993.

Special Public Prosecutor Fazlur Rahman Khan appeared for the state while advocates Ruhul Amin and Ashraf Uddin defended the accused in the case.

Lensmen

FROM PAGE 16 Meanwhile, different organisations and professional bodies yesterday condemned the Rab assault on Gorky and demanded punishment of the responsible officers.

Obaidul Quader, acting general secretary of Awami League, demanded the government mete out punishment to the Rab officials responsible for the assault.

In a statement, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Secretary General Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul said the attitude of the law enforcement agencies including Rab towards journalists is detrimental to free journalism.

Among others, Odhikar, a human rights organisation, Dhaka Journalists Union, and Bangladesh Crime Reporters Association condemned the incident and demanded punishment of the culprits.

Washington and a final step toward acceptance of both countries' possession of nuclear weapons.

Islamabad in turn has said that any move by the United States to sell Patriot anti-missile systems to India would trigger a new arms race in the region, after a US defence team made a presentation last month in New Delhi

"The arms sales is a bit of tricky issue," said C. Raja Mohan, an independent South Asia expert.

"India and the US have to find a way to build defense cooperation, while managing the consequences of F-16 transfers to Pakistan," he said.

A \$4 billion gas pipeline from Iran to India could also be on the agenda after Washington, locked in a war of words with Iran over its nuclear program, reminded New Delhi of its concerns.

Buriganga

FROM PAGE 1 ninety percent of them become dry during the lean period. Housewives are even forced to travel miles for washing and collecting water.

"There are people, particularly migrant day labourers, who are badly suffering as they are unable to wash their clothes or take a bath for days," said Lakhnan, a former fisherman from Basila.

Pollution in the river has also rendered totally barren hundreds of acres agricultural land and also destroyed the river water's ecosystem. Once famous for its variety of local fishes, the Buriganga now has virtually no aquatic life.

There are at least 200 sources from which polluted water pours into the river Buriganga, chief among them sewage waste from the tanneries at Rayer Bazar. The government now has a plan to relocate the Hazaribagh tanneries to Savar with effluent treatment plants.

A top BIWTA official said that all the feeder rivers in the upstream, such as the Jamuna and the Brahmaputra, remain cut off during most of the year due to siltation in confluent areas.

"The river Buriganga becomes almost stagnant as the water flow from upstream is almost totally cut off in the lean period," he said.

Dozens

FROM PAGE 16 Malaysia estimates there were nearly a million illegal workers in the country, mostly from Indonesia but also from the Philippines, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka.

About 382,000, mostly Indonesians, took advantage of the amnesty to depart without penalty but an estimated 400,000 illegal immigrants remain.

Kolkata Test

FROM PAGE 1 he captured 13 wickets to bowl India to a famous upset victory over Australia in 2001.

Pakistan are expected to make two changes to their side, with one of the top-order batsman from the Mohali Test likely to make way and left-arm seamer Rana Naved doubtful to play because of a shoulder injury.

Either Shahid Afridi or Yasir Hameed is expected to be brought in as a specialist batsman after Pakistan's top three contributed just 68 runs in Mohali.

The axe is likely to fall on one of the two left-handed openers, Salman Butt or Taufeeq Umar.

Inzamam said Pakistan would be boosted by their Mohali fightback and also by their track record at Eden Gardens.

"The boys have gained a lot of confidence after Mohali," he said. "They also know how we won the test here in 1999."

In 1999, Pakistan were reduced to 26 for six on the opening day before they rallied win by 46 runs in an Asian Test championship match. They drew the four previous matches there.