

US slaps sanctions on al-Qaeda backers

Assets of 4 Pakistanis frozen

AFP, Washington

The United States imposed sanctions Wednesday on an al-Qaeda backer and three leaders of Pakistan-based Islamist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which was blamed over last year's Mumbai attacks.

The US Treasury said it was imposing an assets freeze on the four Pakistanis, identified as Fazeel-a-Tul Shaykh Abu Mohammed Ameen al-Peshawari, Arif Qasmani, Mohammed Yahya Mujahid and Nasir Javid.

Peshawari allegedly provided assistance, including funding and recruits, to al-Qaeda and the Taliban militia fighting to regain control of Afghanistan and battling government forces in Pakistan.

Qasmani is said to be the chief coordinator for Lashkar and Mujahid the head of the group's media department while Javid had served as its commander in Pakistan.

Lashkar is widely thought to have been behind last November's 60-hour bloodbath in India's Mumbai city, which led to 166 deaths.

The US Treasury said its action came two days after Peshawari, Qasmani and Mujahid were added to a UN blacklist of individuals and entities linked with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

All UN member states are obligated to freeze the funds and other assets of listed individuals and entities included on the blacklist, and to apply other sanctions, such as travel ban and arms embargo, a Treasury statement said.

Qasmani was also linked in the Treasury statement to the July 2006 train bombing in Mumbai that killed 186 people and the February 2007 Samjota Express bombing in India's

Panipat city, which killed 68 people.

He allegedly conducted fundraising activities on behalf of Lashkar in 2005 and utilized money that he received from an alleged Indian crime figure and terrorist supporter Dawood Ibrahim to facilitate the July 2006 train bombing.

But the head of one of Pakistan's biggest charities -- widely viewed as a front for LeT -- condemned the sanctions and charged that the men were welfare workers rather than members of the militant group.

"None of the four belonged to Lashkar-e-Taiba. They are welfare workers in Jamaat-ud-Dawa. None of them have a bank account in the USA or any country abroad," the head of the Dawa charity, Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, told AFP.

"The USA has never produced any proof about the involvement of Dawa in terrorism. We are a private NGO working to promote education, medical cover for the poor and need, and rehabilitation in calamity-hit areas," he added.

Pak troops

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the paramilitary Frontier Corps unit, told AFP.

He said the operation was conducted overnight in the Tirah valley of Khyber, one of Pakistan's seven semi-autonomous tribal areas and through which flows the bulk of supplies destined for US-led and Nato troops in Afghanistan.

Death tolls released by Pakistan are impossible to confirm independently because fighting takes place in closed military zones and the army has faced scepticism that more than 1,600 militants have been killed since late April.

Lashkar-e-Islam said eight of its members died.

Ashraf

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Pinak might have breached diplomatic norms through his comment.

Ashraf urged main opposition BNP not to divide the nation on the issue and join the House to articulate its views on it.

"Tipaimukh dam is a national issue. BNP should not try to divide the nation on such issues. If we get divided on national issues, others might take advantage of it," the minister said.

"I urge them to join the parliamentary committee on Tipaimukh dam," Ashraf said.

Replying to a query on the allegation of serving 'poison-mixed' food to Sheikh Hasina during her stay in prison, he said, "A few allegations like this have been brought. Necessary actions could be taken after investigation."

While speaking at the meeting Ashraf alleged that a total of 26,000 AL leaders and workers were killed during the tenure of the previous BNP-Jamaat coalition government.

Swechasebak League Dhaka City unit leader Milon was killed during a demonstration demanding cancellation of the January 22 election in 2007.

Swechasebak League President AFM Bahauddin Nasim and General Secretary Pankaj Debnath also spoke.

RTI law

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Aziz said Finland introduced RTI in 1976 and thus they now claim themselves as a corruption-free nation in the world. "The scenario of human rights situation is also very impressive in the countries where the law has been introduced," he said.

Addressing the briefing, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad assured the government's all-out effort to assist the Information Commission aiming to ensure people's right to information.

He, however, said that implementation of the act in all offices across the country would take time.

Acting Information Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury told reporters that the government allocated Tk 2.2 crore for the commission.

He said measures have been taken to recruit manpower and prepare office for the commission. "We have also requested all the ministries to take necessary measures for implementation of the law," he told the briefing.

President Zillur Rahman on Wednesday formed the three-member Information Commission to implement the long-cherished RTI.

Aila-hit farmers

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The list has been prepared based on acute needs of the farmers whose crops have been badly damaged, said Mohammad Sayeed Ali, director general of the agriculture extension directorate under the ministry.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury would visit different Aila-hit areas and distribute seeds and fertilisers among the farmers. She would visit Dakop and Batiaghata upazilas in Khulna today to that end.

"We want to restore confidence of the farmers by providing them with seeds and fertilisers. We also want to prove that the government has its responsibility for the affected people," Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Asked about the slip with photograph, the minister said, "We have launched it so that transparency is ensured and one can't take another's said."

Those who have failed to provide photographs have been asked to bring two photocopies of their national identity cards to get the help, she added.

The cyclone-hit farmers have already suffered a huge loss in Aus production. Many of them even may miss the Aman season because of saline water-logging in a few upazilas including the badly affected Koira in Sakthira as the damaged embankments are yet to be repaired.

According to official figures, the cyclone on May 25 damaged 1,742.53 kilometres of embankments, crops on about 3.23 lakh acres of land, 157 bridges and culverts and destroyed about 1.5 lakh livestock.

Matia has directed the lawmakers of the respective areas to complete distribution of the seeds and fertilisers before July 10 so that the farmers could start Aman production.

HC terms Huda

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judgement.

"No self-conscious person can make such remarks," the court said.

The bench, however, disposed of the petition saying, "We shall not issue any rule against the persons who are not aware of the dignity and authority of the High Court judges."

President of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) advocate AFM Mesbahuddin, Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council advocate Abdul Basat Majumder and Additional Attorney General MK Rahman were present.

They told the court that since the statements of Huda and Kamaruzzaman hurt the dignity of the HC, a contempt rule should be issued against them.

Barrister Mainul Hossain, former adviser to a caretaker government, prayed to the court for disposal of the petition with some observations.

Petitioner's counsel Advocate Manzill Murshid said if the HC did not take the statements into cognisance, it will have negative impact on people.

Huda and Kamaruzzaman said the judgment on proclamation of the country's independence was not of the HC rather it was a personal verdict of the judges concerned.

The judges made observations in the verdict as if they are political leaders and the judgment was a political one, the two said.

Their remarks were published in various national dailies on June 30.

SM Zafar Sadik, a lawyer of the Supreme Court (SC), on July 1 filed the contempt of

court petition against them with the HC.

PETITION AGAINST EMJUDDIN

Emajuddin appeared before the same HC bench at 10:30am in connection with a contempt of court petition filed against him by Abdus Salam, who had filed the writ petition regarding the proclaimer of independence on which the HC delivered its verdict.

The court exempted Emajuddin from appearing before the court in person until further order upon his application.

It also directed his counsel barrister Abdullah Al Mamun to reply to the HC rule issued earlier against him.

The same HC bench on June 24 issued a rule upon Emajuddin to explain why the same contempt proceeding should not be taken against him for making contemptuous statement about the HC judges.

JS body

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the lowest compared to those of their counterparts from other South Asian countries.

The committee chief also said they have asked the foreign ministry to ensure that no Bangladesh citizen abroad is harassed, or is dissatisfied at the activities of the country's missions.

Talking to reporters at the Jatiya Sangsad media centre, Mahbub Uddin Khokon said he requested Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, who was present at the committee meeting, to take steps for withdrawal of the Indian envoy.

No headmaster

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they are reluctant to obey her, also an assistant teacher, who took the responsibility of acting headmaster, Amena said.

As a result, problem arises in running the school. The quality of teaching suffers due to paucity of teachers.

Abdur Rahim, an assistant teacher of the same high school, said a school normally lacks coordination among its teachers if the institution does not have a headmaster.

Acting headmaster of Cox's Bazar Government Girls' High School Mohammad Baksh said those who are working as acting headmasters are also efficient, otherwise his school would not have topped in GPA-5 achievers in the district. Problems of many schools would have been solved if the acting headmasters were appointed as head teacher, he added.

A number of guardians requesting anonymity said teachers are getting involved in factionalism and rivalry in absence of headmaster. Other teachers do not abide by the directives of the acting headmaster and they neglect their

class duties. Teachers of many schools remain busy with private tuition.

In Ukhiya upazila, six out of 14 secondary schools are running with acting headmaster.

Six out of 15 secondary schools in Teknaf upazila, four out of 14 in Ramu upazila, six out of 18 in Moheshkhali upazila, eight out of 34 in Chakoria upazila, one out of nine in Kutubdia and one out of 10 schools in Pekua upazila do not have headmasters.

District Secondary Education Officer Md Abdul Latif confirmed the report and said he has written to the higher authorities several times, but to no avail.

He said the government has recently amended the manpower structure to appoint teachers. If it is implemented the problem of the schools would be solved.

Under the manpower structure, a teacher having teaching experience of 12 years at a stretch would be eligible for applying for appointment as headmaster while one having 10 years' continuous teaching experience can apply for the post of assistant headmaster.

3-6 new faces

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Sohel Taj has been on leave since June 6 and is staying in the USA with his family. Hasina is now looking after the activities of the ministry.

Soon after forming the cabinet Hasina warned her colleagues of losing portfolios for failing to perform satisfactorily. There have been rumours of reshuffles in recent times. But sources said she took time to evaluate performances of the members of the council of ministers.

A source meanwhile claimed that Hasina has already finalised five nominations for the posts of minister, state minister and deputy minister.

The prime minister might appoint new ministers to the ministries of labour and employment, housing and public works, and women and children affairs and a few state or deputy ministers to ministries including post and telecommunications, industries, commerce, and communications, the sources said.

Veteran Awami League leaders like Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir would not be considered for being inducted in the cabinet this time too, a source close to Hasina said.

One of the AL joint general secretaries or organising secretaries might be made a minister while a few new faces, including two or three female lawmakers from the

Zabiullah

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Judge Mohammad Sirajul Islam of Special Court passed the order after Ismail along with his lawyers appeared before the court and sought bail.

The lawyers submitted three petitions -- one for sending him to jail on surrender, another for allocating Ismail first class division while the rest for providing him proper treatment.

On June 5 last year, the same court sentenced Ismail 10 years' imprisonment for amassing wealth of Tk 1.29 crore illegally and another three years for concealing wealth information worth Tk 1.16 crore in his statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The former secretary was also fined Tk 10 lakh, in default he has to serve one more year in prison.

His wife Ayesha Zabiullah was also sentenced to three years' imprisonment for abetting his husband.

ACC Assistant Director Helal Uddin Sharif filed the case against the two with Ramna Police Station on November 5, 2007.

Indigenous

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adivashi people in the name of army patrols in the area", and wanted an impartial investigation into the abduction and killing of Alkajya and Mojibar.

"We were forced to move to Sajek in the face of repression. But we cannot live there in peace either. Fear of repression and eviction still haunts us every moment," said Ajit Chakma of Gongaram Dor in Sajek during a press conference at a Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium.

In the press briefing organised by Greater Chittagong Hill Tracts Hill Students' Council, victims told their ordeals of repression and eviction allegedly by the army and Bangla-speaking settlers.

A statement was provided at the conference describing the ongoing repression on adivashi people. Eight victims from different areas under Sajek union signed the statement.

In the statement the signatories claimed that the army and Banglae settlers were whimsically torturing adivashi people and encroaching on their land.

It claimed that following the abduction and killing of Alkajya and Mojibar on May 6 this year, over 20 adivashi people were detained by the army. It said the detainees were intimidated, tortured and even given electric shocks and their belongings were looted.

The statement mentioned five incidents of detention, a number of which resulted in the eviction of adivashi people from their land.

Amar Sadhan Karbari, Kamola Chakma, Kaladhon Chakma, Shukho Chakma, Bali Kumar Chakma, Mintu Chakma, Ajit Chakma, and Jagat Jyoti Chakma signed the statement.

Adivashi people migrated to Sajek, from places like Dighinala and Baghaichhari, before 1982 and now following repression and eviction, they are leaving for Mizoram in India, the statement said.

Different political and cultural organisations of Dhaka University (DU) attended the conference.

Burnt oil

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During a visit to Buriganga this correspondent found that the water at several spots had turned into pitch-black colour due to reckless dumping of leftover chemicals used for dyeing cloth.

Dyers were found busy with dyeing jeans and other cloth at those places.

Shawkat, busy with dyeing cloth in Ishpani area of Keraniganj, was found emptying a drum of dyes. He said he had been doing the business for the last 25 years.

"We dye mainly the cloth of garment factories, especially jeans. We can dye around 500 pieces of cloth a day," he said.

According to him, more than 10 businessmen are involved in dyeing cloth at different points including Char Bhairab, Telghat and Muhuri Pottriontherverbank.

Khalil, another dyer engaged in the business for the last eight years, said, "We have to heat the chemical in a drum before we soak jeans into them that turns the area into a smoky and dirty place."

Of over 300 effluent discharge outlets at Tongi, Hazaribagh, Tejaoga, Tarabo, Narayanganj, Savar, Ashulia, Gazipur and Ghorashal, 19 carry the major discharge of domestic and industrial wastes, according to a joint study of the World Bank and Institute of Water Modelling (IWM).

Of the discharged untreated liquid waste, 61 percent are industrial and 39 percent domestic, the study says.

These outlets are the major polluters of the rivers but burnt oil or dyeing chemicals, though dumped by a small number of traders, can in no way be neglected, because these are dumped on regular basis, said Abu Naser Khan.

GP gets nod

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received the official consent from the SEC today and look forward to an expeditious launching of the public offer and successful listing of our shares in the country's bourses," Grameenphone Chief Executive Officer Oddvar Hesjedal, said in a written statement yesterday.

"We are ready and will be following a fast process for fulfilling certain necessary conditions and formalities," he added.

SEC asked Grameenphone to submit its audited financial report as of December 31, 2008 within July 31 this year.

As many as 6.94 crore shares will be floated through Grameenphone's IPO, to realise Tk 486.07 crore from the capital market.

The price of each share has been increased to Tk 10 from the company's proposed price of Tk 1 following demands from market stakeholders.

Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) in March this year decided not to list securities with face value of Tk 1, and urged Grameenphone to increase its share price to Tk 10.

In July 2008, Grameenphone worth \$3.2 billion back then, finalised its plan to raise \$300 million or Tk 2,058 crore from the capital market, \$150 million of which would come from the stock market, while the remaining would be raised through private placements or pre-IPO.

Later in October same year the company said it might cut its planned IPO to \$125 million -- \$65 million of which would come from the stock market, and the remaining \$60 million through private placements.

Since then the company halved its IPO package, as foreign institutional investors showed the least interest due to the ongoing global economic slowdown.

Grameenphone submitted

its final prospectus in January this year. Citigroup Global Markets Bangladesh Private Limited is the issue manager of the IPO.

Saiful Islam, managing director of investment bank Equity Partners Limited, said an issue like Grameenphone was urgently needed at the moment when the market is bullish and investors are looking for new quality shares.

"It will also help boost investors' confidence in the market, who have been waiting for Grameenphone shares for a long time," he added.

The Grameenphone IPO will be a catalyst for many big national and international companies to come in and get listed with Bangladesh capital market, said Islam, also the vice-president of DSE.

He said general investors have also been waiting eagerly for the Grameenphone issue.

Echoing him, Salahuddin Ahmed Khan, professor of finance at Dhaka University, said it is a great achievement.

"It will encourage other big and multinational companies to be listed with our stock exchanges," he said.

Norway's telecom giant Telenor owns 62 percent of Grameenphone (GP), which was launched in 1997, while the remaining 38 percent is held by local Grameen Telecom. The share of floating will be proportionately spread between the two shareholders.

GP now enjoys a healthy balance sheet. Its net profit jumped by 68 percent to Tk 320 crore by the end of 2008, compared to Tk 130 crore of the year before.

GP is Bangladesh's market leader among six mobile operators having 21.05 million subscribers, followed by Banglalink's 10.95 million, and AKTEL's 8.84 million as of May 2009.

Chief of JMB's

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Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, at Fakirerpool in the capital.

The SB disclosed the arrests of the militants and seizures of the arms and books yesterday calling in journalists to its city office and handing them a statement that contained information on the arrests. The arrestees were also paraded before journalists.

Shahadat along with Selim, a leader of JMB, formed Islam and Muslim following their disagreement with some influential JMB leaders over financial matters, according to the SB statement.

However, Shahadat told journalists, "We started the outfit organising work around four months ago in an attempt to have our contribution in the country. We contacted around 15 people asking them to join."

SB officials said Shahadat was made the chief of Bagmara after Bangla Bhai made the upazila an organisational district. He actively took part in the Bangla Bhai-led vigilante operations in Rajshahi region under the banner of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMB) in 2004.

The three other arrestees were also close aides to Bangla Bhai. But due to his organisational capability, Shahadat was made the JMB commander of the greater Rajshahi region.

The SB officials also said Shahadat fled to India after the arrests of former JMB chief Abdur Rahman and his deputy Bangla Bhai. He played a key role in strengthening the JMB's wing in India during his two-and-a-half years stay in Murshidabad, Nadia and Malda districts of West Bengal state.

"On his return, Shahadat formed the Islam and Muslim with an aim to dominate an area comprised of Gomastapur, Shibganj and Bholahat upazilas of Chapainawabganj, Bagmara of Rajshahi and Ranimagar and Atrai of Naogaon," said the SB

statement.

For their attempt to this end, the JMB members opted to wage an armed struggle (Jihad) with small arms rather than their usual usage of bombs. The newly-formed organisation also started training their members on arms and bullet manufacturing, the statement said.

Asked how he learned to make arms and bullets, Shahadat told The Daily Star that he does not know how to make them.

Police earlier arrested four other members of the JMB offshoot in Shibganj, Bholahat and Gomastapur upazilas of Chapainawabganj and seized four single-shot guns from each of them, bullets, books on jihad and bullet-making materials.

The arrestees are Abdul Munib, Abdul Mumin, Abdul Rakib alias Sumon, and Rabul Islam.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds: Rapid Action Battalion arrested Enamul Haque, 22, a JMB member and a charge-sheeted accused in a murder case, at Kalai upazila of Jyapurhat yesterday morning.

Police said Enamul was conducting JMB activities from hiding.

Criminal killed

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The deceased was Al-Amin alias Rana, 30, and the injured were his accomplice Mehedi Hasan Masud, 27 and tea vendor Russell Mahmud Khan, 25.

Witnesses said a gang of at least seven armed criminals made the attack during a meeting between construction labourers and local Juba League leader Abbas Uddin around 12:20am. Russell sustained bullet injury on his left shoulder when the gang opened fire at Abbas Uddin, they added.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Mosaddeq Hossain Khan of Cantonment Police Station and also the investigation officer of the case said, "We heard gun fires while on patrol and rushed to the office of the construction labourers at Manikdi Bazar."

The gang, in the meantime, had left the scene and were running from locals, said SI Mosaddeq, adding that as the gang opened fire at the mob to make their escape, police were compelled to retaliate with gunshots.

The SI said police with the help of locals caught the two and recovered a revolver and five bullets from their possession.

The two criminals and Russell were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

DMCH sources said Rana and Mehedi received bullets in their legs and beating marks were seen all over their bodies while tea vendor Mahmud received a bullet at his back.

Rana and Mehedi were later shifted to Pongu hospital where Rana succumbed to his injury at 5:30am.

Hosney Ara Begum, officer-in-charge of Cantonment Police Station, mentioned an earlier feud between two local groups as the reason behind the incident. However, she did not disclose names of any groups.

JCD infighting

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said only those who have failed to achieve the posts are trying to create anarchy.

As per the party decision, the new leaders will form the full committee by next ten days to continue its tenure till January 2010.

Meanwhile, the new JCD central leaders yesterday night called on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at the latter's Gulshan office.

The BNP chief urged the JCD leaders to fight against ongoing conspiracy against the country.

She asked them to strengthen the party through reconstituting its all units across the country with dedicated leaders.

Khaleda also urged them not to be confused with anyone's provocation as it only affects the party and weakens its organisational structure.

As the news of forming new committee reached the campus, many JCD leaders and activists took to the street protesting inclusion of the 'controversial leaders.'

They expressed concern over inclusion of BNP leader Tuku who had