

# Colombian forces kill 22 Farc rebels

BBC ONLINE

Colombian security forces say they have killed at least 22 Farc rebels in fighting near the Ecuadorian border.

Police commandos were dropped by helicopter after air force planes bombed a rebel camp in the jungle.

The fighting in the Putumayo region happened near the town of San Miguel, where eight policemen died in a rebel ambush earlier this month.

President Juan Manuel Santos said it was "the biggest blow in recent times" to the left-wing rebel group.

He said the operation was a sign of how he would respond to the war strategy of the rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc).

The president succeeded Alvaro Uribe when he won a clear victory in a run-off election in June this year.

During his election campaign he had pledged to continue the tough security policies of his predecessor, who left office with high approval ratings after years of hard-line policies against the rebels.

Speaking after Sunday's raid in Putumayo, Mr Santos said he had given "clear orders" to the security forces to "continue giving these kind of blows without treaty or quarter".

He also thanked the government of Ecuador for support.

## AL activist

**FROM PAGE 16** Mamun was whisked off to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where a doctor declared him dead, said Hasina, a Mahila AL leader of ward-85.

The motive behind the murder remained unknown.

Police said Mamun was accused in 12 cases filed with the Jatrabari Police Station. He was released from jail last month after serving two years in prison.

Mamun's family members claimed that the cases were filed against him during the tenure of the previous BNP-led government for his affiliation with Awami League.

# Evidence ready

**FROM PAGE 1** Nizami, its Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojahid, Assistant Secretaries General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Molla, Nayeb-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayeede, Jamaat leader Mir Kashem Ali, and Abdul Hannan of Jatiya Party, Abul Kalam Azad of Faridpur, Abdus Sobhan, a former Jamaat lawmaker from Pabna and Abdul Alim, former BNP minister from Joypurhat.

Of them, Jamaat leaders Nizami, Mojahid, Kamaruzzaman, Abdul Quader and Sayeede are now in jail with links to genocide and crimes against humanity.

The prosecution team and investigation agency collected the evidence after visiting several districts including Brahmanbaria, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Khulna and Tangail.

Md Shahinur Islam, registrar of the International Crimes Tribunal, told reporters at his office that Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayeede would be produced before the tribunal today.

The tribunal will sit at 10:30am to hear the petition by the prosecution to keep Sayeede under detention, he said.

It will also hold hearing on a few applications filed by Sayeede and four other detained Jamaat leaders, he added.

A team from the investigation agency began probing the allegations of war crimes against Sayeede in Pirojpur for the second time.

The four-member team headed by assistant superintendent of police Helal Uddin will record statements of witnesses in the two cases filed against Sayeede on charge of crimes against humanity.

They will also visit 12 killing fields and graveyards in the district.

Ashraf Hossain and Mohammad Kamaruzzaman, who were Islami Chhatra Sangha leaders of a college in Jamalpur at that time, occupied the house of renowned writer Mina Farah in Sherpur and the Circuit House in Mymensingh, Zead told reporters.

The two used the places as detention camps. They led Al Shams and Razkars, and tortured and murdered people there.

ing the operation, saying better co-operation was improving security along the frontier.

Farc rebels have stepped up their violent campaign since president Santos took office on 7 August.

Although a senior Farc leader has said the group is prepared to negotiate a settlement, more than 40 security personnel have been killed so far this month in a series of rebel attacks and ambushes.

Analysts say the raids may be intended to force the government into peace talks.

But Mr Santos has said he will not negotiate with the rebels until they release all their hostages and stop attacks.

The Putumayo region is a traditional stronghold of the Farc, as well as a major cocaine-producing area.

## Blast in factory

**FROM PAGE 1** ries at around 6:30pm.

Abdul told The Daily Star that the explosion caused a fire that spread over the tin-shed factory. Factory staff doused the fire and rescued the workers trapped inside, but by the time the six had received severe injuries.

Samanta Lal Sen, project director of DMCH Burn and Plastic Surgery unit, told The Daily Star that the victims suffered 40 to 90 percent burns, and all the injured were in critical condition.

After the incident, panic gripped the area, and a rumour that several workers were killed spread. Agitated people gathered on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near the factory and traffic movement came to a halt in the area for about 15 minutes.

On information, Hotapara police went to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Kamal Hossain, sub-inspector of Joydevpur Police Station, said, the engineers of the factory primarily assumed that the explosion occurred due to mechanical glitch.

# Youth stabs girlfriend, himself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth stabbed his girlfriend and then tried to commit suicide yesterday after the girl's parents refused his marriage proposal at Bangshal in the capital.

The youth, Saidur Rahman, 19, works at an electric wire factory at Sat Raowza, while the girl, Sharmin Akhter, 15, is a class eight student of Yusuf Sarder High School. They live in separate flats of the same building at Nimtoli.

Sharmin said Saidur stormed into their flat and stabbed her twice in the abdomen while she was preparing for school at 9:30am. He then tried to kill himself by stabbing repeatedly in his abdomen, she added.

Sharmin's mother was asleep at that time, and no one else was in the flat.

Locals rushed the two to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Saidur who was in police custody at DMCH was in a critical condition, said hospital sources.

Sharmin's friend Lovely said Sharmin's parents turned down Saidur's proposal to marry their daughter on Sunday, and this might be the reason he tried to commit suicide.

Talking to The Daily Star at DMCH, Sharmin admitted she loves Saidur.

Abdul Mannan, officer-in-charge of Bangshal Police Station, said the boy stabbed himself and his girlfriend as the girl refused to elope with him.

## NGO pulls

**FROM PAGE 16** centres at the city's Rampura and Badda under Khilgaon Police Station.

However, it started working in the labour sector from 2006 in violation of the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance 1978.

Kalpna Akter justified the organisation's unauthorised work in the labour sector saying it was the responsibility of the donors to get permission from the government for them to work on labour rights.

However, the 17 other NGOs likely to get back their licences include Village Development Centre, Social Advancement for Rural Mass, Association for Rural Development, Papan Foundation and Khedaba Khudra O Kutir Shilpa Samaj Kalayan Samsanga.

Besides, 28 other NGOs have also applied to renew their licences but their cases are not being considered right now, the Ngoab official said.

The Ngoab cancelled the licence of all the 465 NGOs for running projects without renewing licences, non-submission of annual audit reports and misuse of foreign funds, among other reasons.

The official said the bureau has asked the banks concerned to freeze the bank accounts of these NGOs and sent letters to the deputy commissioners concerned to seize their moveable and immovable properties.

If any NGO is found operating with foreign funds after the cancellation of the registration, its registration with other regulatory authorities or ministries will permanently be cancelled, he added.

Jafar Ullah Khan, deputy director of the Ngoab, told The Daily Star on Thursday, the bureau will scrutinise all the review petitions of the NGOs to renew their licences.

## 7 other MDGs

**FROM PAGE 1** thousand births in 1990-91, came down to 54 now, according to the MDG Progress Report 2009 prepared by the Planning Commission of Bangladesh.

"The country will easily achieve the target by reducing it to 48," said Prof Ahmad, chairman of Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) that works as the Peoples' Forum on MDGs.

Maternal mortality rate per thousand live births is now 320-348, down from 574 per thousand in 1990-91, but it is quite high in terms of reducing the rate to 143 by 2015.

"Besides, malnutrition among children is widespread, which is over 50 percent," said Prof Ahmad, also former president of Bangladesh Economic Association.

Though poverty rate came down to 37 percent from 60 percent in 1990-91, the number of poor then and now would be the same. But the MDG target of cutting down it to 30 percent by 2015 may be possible, he said.

Prof Ahmad said there are certain pockets like the Monga-prone, haor, hilly, urban slums and coastal areas where people are poorer than those in other parts of the country.

"There are special programmes for these, but these need efficient implementation," Prof Ahmad continued.

In education, enrolment in primary education is 90 percent, which can easily be 100 percent by 2015, but the problem is the drop out rate of about 50 percent, he said.

# Ansar meant

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in our services. You do whatever we ask for," said a police sub-inspector as he ordered Jabbar, a senior Ansar member, to wash his (SI's) son's clothes.

While Hamid herds in the field, Havidler (section commander) Jabbar (pseudonym) washes the clothes at a police camp in Jessore. About 9,500 regular battalion ansars assist the police in maintaining law and order in plain land.

Ansar members allege they even have to work as domestic help in the houses of officers of army, police or BDR or as gardeners or shepherds or an assistant taking ration to officers' houses.

"Neither of the rank in the force starting from battalion commander to battalion ansar allows engaging the force in such odd jobs. We give our force in the hand of others just for maintaining security but the force abuse power," says a high-ranked Ansar official.

Ansars did not see an end to the longstanding practice of colonial form of repression although the colonial era Ansars' Act, 1948 was repealed and replaced with formulation of three new laws in 1995.

The current law defines ansar as a public security force at first and assisting the government or any government bodies is considered its second important concern.

There is no provision in any law for involving ansars in odd jobs that diminish confidence of a force, insiders say.

If an Ansar member protests, he faces unutterable chiding or gets transferred to remote places, said Babul, another Ansar member.

An Ansar cannot gather enough courage to protest until he becomes regularised in the force and it took at least 12 years to get regularised, Babul added.

The existing law permits regularisation in nine years but it is not being implemented yet.

Against this backdrop, Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party has recently recommended engaging the force in maintenance of law and order in the villages using its strong chain of network.

The seven-point recommendation also includes renaming the force after Bangladesh Public Security Force (BPSF) as insiders say negligence to Ansar starts from the name itself.

"A single executive order of involving Ansar in law and order maintenance, which is ensured by the law, can change the fate of Ansar," said Director General of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party Maj Gen Chowdhury Hasan Sarwady.

"Changing the name of the force is linked with restoring its confidence and honour. A force cannot work bearing a name that has a historical bearing of humiliation, underestimation and fundamentalism," he added.

Currently, different international militant and fundamental organisations have names like "Harkatul Ansar" or "Tahdiud Ansar", he argued.

Braving all odds Ansars made numerous contributions to maintaining security and developing socioeconomic status of the country whenever they had a chance. But that,

addition to the existing five -- director general, director, additional director, deputy director and assistant director.

The number of posts for junior officers, however, remained unchanged, according to the bill, which was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the home ministry for scrutiny.

The bill proposed keeping the post of director general of the force reserved for the army and other officials appointed by the government from armed forces' commissioned officers on deputation or by promoting junior officers of the force.

It also proposed setting up three types of courts -- special border guard court, special summary guard court, summary border guard court -- for holding trial offences.

The government has moved to introduce the new law, repealing the existing one, in the wake of the heinous killings of army officers at Bangladesh Rifles headquarters in February last year.

The unprecedented mutiny broke out when BDR jawans at their yearly Darbar (assembly) raised demands before officers who refused to give into those.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid placed another bill seeking to enact law to establish an International Mother Language Institute in a bid to develop and preserve mother language, and expansion of Bengali language abroad.

## BDR jawans

**FROM PAGE 16** force "Border Guard Bangladesh" instead of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

The proposed legislation also specified formation of the force, its control, administration and discipline with provisions of harsh punishment including death penalty to its members for committing various offences.

The bill, however, reduced the ranks for jawans to three from six in the existing BDR order 1972.

According to the existing law, which will be repealed through the enactment of the new one, the ranks of riflemen of the force were -- havildar-major, havildar and havildar assistant, nayek and nayek assistant, lance-nayek and lance-nayek assistant, bugler and sepoy and sepoy assistant and non-combatant.

In the proposed law, the ranks of the force are -- havildar, nayek and lance-nayek.

According to the current law, classes of signalman of the BDR are -- havildar-major, havildar and havildar assistant, nayek and nayek assistant, lance-nayek and lance-nayek assistant, signalman sepoy and sepoy assistant and non-combatant.

In this regard, the proposed law recommended two types of border guard -- sepoy and non-combatant.

Two new posts -- additional director general and deputy director general -- were created in the proposed legislation in

too, went unrecognised.

In drives against outlaws in northeastern region and insurgents in southern region regular battalion Ansars have always been an active and effective assisting force.

Sixteen out of total 38 battalions are involved in counter insurgency drives in the hills, while over six battalions are involved in the drives against outlaws in northeastern region.

"During these drives, especially the one against outlaws, it is the Ansars who are sent in front during fight at night. Risking their lives the Ansars go in front and bust a den of outlaws or criminals but never get the credit," said a deputy director of Ansar preferring anonymity.

Besides regular battalion Ansar, there are 31,500 embodied Ansars working at different government, non-government, autonomous and private organisations across the country on daily basis.

The Village Defence Party (VDP), a voluntary force whose members are trained with many socioeconomic development activities like fisheries, cultivation and farming, is another wing through which Ansar has made revolutionary contributions to socioeconomic development including women empowerment in the country.

Half of the 56 lakh VDP members are women and trained with economic activities. Every village has a 64-member VDP team including 32 women.

Besides maintaining law and order, Ansars can effectively be used in assisting police investigation and checking crimes like child and women trafficking, violence against women, acid throwing, fatwa, religious fundamentalism and stalking, insiders say.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND** The British rulers formed Ansar for the first time in this subcontinent in 1946 by the name "Home Guards" to assist the colonial police.

After the Separation Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1948 turned the force into Ansar, exposing the fundamental nature of Pakistan. The word Ansar is imported from Arabic meaning an auxiliary force.

In 1952, Ansars spontaneously took part in the Language Movement and martyr Abdul Jabbar was an Ansar commander from Mymensingh.

In 1971, Ansars took away 40,000 rifles from their arsenal and organised and trained freedom fighters during the Liberation War. It was a group of 12 Ansars who gave the first guard of honour to the first acting president of Bangladesh Syed Nazrul Islam in Mujibnagar.

The Pakistan government formed Razakar force in June 1, 1971 relinquishing Ansar against the backdrop that they joined the Liberation War.

During the war 670 Ansars including Bir Shreshtha Hamidur Rahman laid down their lives.

After independence the Bangladesh government revived all forces in 1972 but did not bother to think any reform in once relinquished Ansar, a force that never deserted the people in any peril.

## RIVER POLLUTION

# DoE fines 2 factories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment fined two factories Tk 52.5 lakh for discharging toxic liquid into Turag and Bongshri rivers yesterday.

The two factories are RL Yarn Dyeing in Konabari of Joybepur and Moazzem Knit and Dyeing Limited in Kaliakoir.

A team led by Munir Chowdhury, director (Enforcement), of DoE in a drive against river pollution found the factories, capable of dyeing four to five tonnes of knit fabric a day, guilty for draining around 1.64 lakh cubic metres of untreated liquid waste in the rivers over the years.

Munir said the factories had been sent several notices to set up effluent treatment plants, environmental monitoring systems and private water reservoirs within the factory yards.

The DoE may disconnect gas, electricity and water supply, even take harsher legal actions, he warned, unless the factories stop polluting immediately and comply with the environmental regulations.

Effluent treatment plant (ETP), a unit of refinery plants, which purifies the polluted water out of industries and factories, is made mandatory for factories producing pollutants in Bangladesh, but often with no effect.

## AL, BNP

**FROM PAGE 16** "Catch the Razakars" and then ensued the scuffle between the AL activists and the BNP men at the airport. The clash lasted for six to seven minutes.

Sensing that police were coming, the AL and BNP men pretended to hug each other and left the place, reported Ena.

But after a while the BNP activists held a protest rally on the airport parking lot, and claimed that Hasina had left the place through an alternative way in the face of their blockade.

Ena also reported that Hasina could not deliver a speech to her party members amidst chaos created by the welcoming crowd.

BNP activists said they will hold protest programmes outside the hotel where Sheikh Hasina will stay during her visit, outside her reception centres and the UN General Assembly.

Members of the USAAL and Jubo League alleged that activists of BNP-Jamaat alliance were conspiring against them to create chaos.

Komoruiddin, secretary of the BNP central committee of international affairs, however, said, "Sheikh Hasina has tarnished the image of Bangladesh by inciting her activists to attack a peaceful gathering of BNP".

## Pabna govt

**FROM PAGE 1** submitted our transfer applications to the deputy commissioner," said Assistant Commissioner (land) Md Mostaque Ahmed.

The government officials at a meeting at the DC's office yesterday evening discussed the latest situation surfacing over the recruitment of staff at the Pabna DC Office.

The meeting, chaired by DC of Pabna AFM Monjur Kadir, took five decisions, sources at DC office said.

It demanded punishment of the offenders involved in the attack on DC office staff. A committee would be formed to assist officials facing trouble. If any officer is transferred forcefully, it will be resisted with combined effort, said the AC (land).

On Friday AL men allegedly forced to halt the recruitment examinations against 17 vacant posts at the DC office, raising an allegation of question papers leak.

Vehicles of the administration were vandalised and its staff were also assaulted during the attack.

The meeting also asked the officers of different departments to submit reports if they face trouble from the influential. A five-member delegation team would meet the prime minister soon to inform her about the matter.

Two more Sub-Inspectors were asked to show cause for failing to perform their duties, said Superintendent of Police Jamil Ahmed. The officials are Md Shukur and Md Sifat. The police are trying to nab the criminals, added the SP.

Meanwhile two feuding groups of ruling Awami League brought out protest procession in the town yesterday evening.

District Juba League Secretary Rakib Hassan Tipu led a procession and demanded punishment of the attackers.

Another group of the ruling party activists, backed by local lawmaker Golam Faruk Khandaker, brought out procession and burnt effigy of the DC.

# Strong laws

FROM PAGE 1

expenses for conducting cases and give the money in compensation to the affected individuals or organisations.

In defence of the new legislation, the state minister said the special magistrate can only run mobile courts under the existing laws to take actions against only production, import, marketing, stocking of polythene shopping bags and against vehicles responsible for polluting environment by emitting smoke.

"The special magistrate's court cannot take actions related serious environment offences under the existing law," he said in a brief statement tagged with the copy of the bill.

Under the proposed law, all sorts of cases involving environment pollution can be filed with the special magistrate's courts, Hasan Mahmud added.

**CLIMATE CHANGETRUST** The proposed legislation on climate change trust says the government will constitute a 17-member trustee board as soon as possible after enactment of the law for tackling adverse impacts of climate change for which the government has already allocated Tk 1,400 crore.

The ministers of finance, agriculture, food and disaster management, foreign, women and children affairs, water resources, shipping, health and family welfare, and LGRD, and secretaries of the cabinet division, finance division and the central bank's governor are, among others, members of the trustee board to be led by the minister for environment and forest.

The bill also proposed formation of a 12-member technical committee comprised of government officials and climate change experts to assist the trustee board to perform its functions.

The board will work on climate change adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer, finance and investment and take necessary actions for conducting research.

It will have a "climate change trust fund" which will be consisted of funds received from the government, donor agencies and countries and

different sources approved by the government.

In defence of enactment of the legislation, the state minister said Bangladesh has been recognised as the most vulnerable country regarding the effects of climate change.

The government has already taken various measures including approval of Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009 and also formed a climate change trust fund to tackle possible adverse impacts of climate change, he said.

## PM's adviser

**FROM PAGE 1** (Awami League) will be recruited.

"If any officer found recruiting outsiders bypassing the directive will be taken to task," he said claiming that the directive came from the prime minister.

The Health Department has been directed not to divulge any information to the journalists, he told a correspondent at the meeting.

"No information of the Health Department would be given to the journalists," said Modasser Ali, apparently irritated by the irregularities in the Health Ministry and paucity of health measures in the public hospitals focused by the media.

He told the correspondent that investigation would be made into the allegations of corruption in Gopalganj Modern Sadar Hospital.

Modasser Ali parried a volley of questions of reporters when he was attending a meeting in the conference hall of Gopalganj Sadar Hospital that discussed the situation of anthrax in the district at 10:00 am.

Media reported that around 500 people have been afflicted by anthrax across the country.

Civil Surgeon Dr Mostafizur Rahman Mia, district AL President Md Ali Khan Abu Mia, General Secretary Emdadul Haq Chowdhury, sadar Upazila Chairman Sheikh Lutful Rahman Bachhu and senior officials of the government and NGOs attended the meeting.

## UN award

**FROM PAGE 1** MDGs by 2015 despite the adverse impacts of the recent global economic crisis and climate change.

The premier said she always considers children's welfare as very close to her heart. In this regard, she quoted Nobel Laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore as saying, "every time a child is born, renews my faith that God has not given up on men."

"This gesture is particularly encouraging to us as we have been sparing no efforts in achieving all the MDGs by 2015 despite the adverse impacts of the recent global economic crisis, global warming and climate change," Hasina said, speaking briefly while receiving the award.

The PM's press secretary said the annual MDG awards were intended to support and raise awareness about the UN development goals while the global forum had set a deadline of 15 years for the member nations to achieve them.

The award giving ceremony came only few hours after Hasina arrived in New York to join the UNGA.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Planning Minister AK Khandker, Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhul Haque and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni were present.

## Indian train

**FROM PAGE 16** The probe would also look into media reports that alcohol was found in the station manager's office in contravention of strict rules, Singh was quoted as saying.

India's state-run railway system -- still the main form of long-distance travel despite fierce competition from new private airlines -- carries 18.5 million people daily.