



PHOTO: AFP

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (L) is greeted by Chinese President Hu Jintao in Sanya in Hainan Province yesterday on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit.

## US drone strike kills six in Pakistan

Pakistani PM criticises strikes

AFP, Peshawar

US drones yesterday resumed missile attacks in Pakistan for the first time in a month, killing six fighters from the Al-Qaeda-linked Haqqani network on the Afghan border, officials said.

Unmanned aircraft fired four missiles into a vehicle travelling through the South Waziristan district, targeting a common root for Taliban and Al-Qaeda-linked militants who infiltrate Afghanistan to attack US troops.

"It was a US drone attack. Four missiles were fired. The target was a vehicle. Several militants were killed. The death toll is six," a Pakistani military official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Another Pakistani security official confirmed the same details of the attack near the small town of Angoor Adda in South Waziristan, around six kilometres from the border with Afghanistan.

Pakistani intelligence officials said the dead belonged to the Haqqani group, an Al-Qaeda ally.

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani yesterday criticised US drone strikes in his country's tribal belt, saying they undermined anti-terror efforts.

Gilani said his government had convinced other countries of the world through diplomatic channels that "these drone attacks are creating problems for us."

## Suicide blast on Afghan elders kills 10

AFP, Asadabad

A suicide attack ripped through a gathering of tribal elders in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province yesterday, killing 10 people, interior ministry spokesman Zemarai Bashary said.

"A suicide attacker targeted a gathering of tribal elders in the Asmar district of Kunar today," Bashary told AFP. "Ten people have been martyred and seven others have been injured."

The district police chief, Mohammad Shoaib, said the bomber blew himself up after approaching an elder, Malik Zarin, to hug him in greeting.

"The suicide attacker approached them, hugged Malik Zarin and then detonated the explosives strapped to his body," Shoaib said.

## Govt high-ups had link

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then director general of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, in his testimony also said he had heard of Brig Gen Rezzakul Haider, former director of National Security Intelligence (NSI), being involved in the smuggling.

Assistant Commissioner (prosecution) of Police Nirmalendu Bikash Chakraborty said Rumi, a witness of the arms haul, gave a nine-page statement under section 164 before the court of Chittagong Metropolitan Magistrate Muntasir Ahmed.

In the statement, Rumi said he received a phone call from Col Rezaur Rahman around 6:00am on April 2, 2004. Rezaur informed that a huge amount of arms and ammunition were held at Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited (CUFL) jetty.

But Rezaur could not say where the arms came from, who smuggled the arms into the country and why, said Rumi. Then Rumi called then

prime minister Khaleda Zia to give the news but she said she had already been informed.

Rumi called back Rezaur around 7:45am and ordered him to probe the matter. Rezaur informed him the weapons were taken to Dampara Police Line in the port city.

The former DG continued saying that then state minister for home affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar at about 10:00am over the phone asked him to go with him (Babar) to Chittagong. When Rumi said he did not want to go without the prime minister's permission, Babar assured him that the premier had given her consent.

Rumi along with Babar and Anwarul Iklab, then DG of Rapid Action Battalion, reached Chittagong on a helicopter.

Rumi said they went to the police line where they saw short machineguns, grenades, rocket launchers and some other automatic fire-

arms which he had not seen before.

He came to know that those weapons had been brought from China for a secessionist organisation of India, the United Liberation Front of Assam (Ulfa).

He also heard of NSI Director Rezzakul Haider having links with Ulfa leader Paresh Barua, Rumi said.

In an incident between January and February 2004, he asked Rezaul to arrest Paresh as he received information that the Ulfa leader was seen at the capital's Gulshan. But Rezzakul informed Rumi that Paresh could not be traced there.

Rumi added a five-member committee headed by then home secretary Omar Faruk was formed to investigate the matter.

The committee submitted an incomplete report since the NSI and some of the government high-ups were involved in the incident, Rumi noted.

## Symbol of the timeless

FROM PAGE 1

ended and the commencement of a new one, a stock-taking of crops, indeed of productivity are the underpinnings we speak of.

There is, then, about Baishakh something of the pastoral. In that larger sense of the meaning --- and quite removed from the formalities attendant on its advent in these largely urban times --- it is the village, that timelessness of agrarian life that Baishakh recalls every year.

There is a plenitude of colour, an abundance of music redolent of Baishakh. Add to that colour and to that melody the power of nature to remind the world of what it does or can do to make its presence felt yet once again. In the lowing clouds hanging over the rustic fields, in the winds which sweep across the earth before flashes of lightning and ferocity of thunderclaps precede the fall of rain across the land comes that reminder of Baishakh being a particularly a local affair as it is of the people of this land as it is of

the half of it that is today part of another land. Baishakh goes beyond the frontiers that demarcate the political realities which today define life in what once was one whole, unified Bengal.

And yet Baishakh brings all Bangalees --- here and over there and all across the Bangalee diaspora --- together in a spontaneous offering of homage to the land and to the natural elements that have kept it going for thousands of years.

Baishakh is all that and much more. It is a symbolism of all the good the Bengalis can claim for themselves through the poetry flowing from the minds of its greatest men. Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Dwijendra Lal Roy, Atulprasad and so many others have sung paean to Bengal through the media of song and dance. Through the mysticism which defines faith, through the devotional songs of Lalon and Hason Raja, Baishakh rediscovers the aesthetics of life in these

parts.

Yes, this morning it is truly a celebration of the past we lose ourselves in. Baishakh is all about losing oneself in order to reinvent oneself. The Bengali spirit that has all so often been a hallmark of its politics and its poetry once more goes back to the magic inherent in its heritage in order to expand the cultural parameters of the future.

In Baishakh, there are all the intimations of rain about to descend to earth, of storms ready to blow, of the rainbow taking hold of the imagination. In the waterfall laughter of women is a lilt touching the soul, ever so softly. In the conversations of men are heard the stirrings of the flute which long ago were coursed through the hamlets of this land and will be heard once again this morning.

On Pahela Baishakh, we celebrate ourselves. We celebrate all that is of us, that had been our ancestors' and that will be our children's.

Shubho Nababarsha!

## Ramna blast cases

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Following the blast, two cases were filed with Ramna Police Station.

One of the trial remains stuck as the Supreme Court registrar is yet to give his opinion on whether the trials of both cases could be held in the same court.

Ironically, the case filed under Explosive Substances Act is pending with the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 Dhaka.

Masdar Hossain, the then judge of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1, in a letter on September 29, 2009 sought the SC registrar's opinion.

Talking to The Daily Star, officials of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 yesterday said they did not receive any reply from the Supreme Court registrar's office till date.

Seven and a half years after the incident, during the immediate past caretaker rule, the investigators found Harkatul-Jihad (Huji) links to the blast. Criminal Investigation Department pressed charges against 14 members of banned militant outfit Huji on December 30, 2008.

The charge-sheeted

accused are Huji top leaders Mufti Abdul Hannan, Mufti Shafiqur Rahman, Moulana Yahiya, Mufti Abdul Hye, Moulana Shawkat Osman alias Sheikh Farid, Moulana Abu Bakar alias Selim Hawlader, Moulana Mohammad Tajuddin, Moulana Abdul Hannan, Sabir, Arif Hasan Suman, Moulana Akbar Hossain alias Helaluddin, Moulana Abu Taher, Moulana Abdur Rouf, Hafez Jahangir Alam Badar and Shahadat Ullah alias Jewel.

Of them, Hannan, Suman, Hossain, Abu Taher and Rouf are behind bars while Akbar is out on a High Court bail. The other eight are still at large.

Meantime, the other case filed for murder is now pending with the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka. The then Judge Kaniz Akther Nasrina Khanam of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-3 sent the murder case back to this court as it could not complete its trial within the stipulated time of 135 working days.

The same court on November 25 last year fixed May 31 for hearing of the case. The charge-sheeted

## Quit

FROM PAGE 1

them to justice.

They came up with the demands at a press briefing held at the party chairperson's Gulshan office. They also sought resignation of chairmen of parliamentary standing committees for their alleged involvement in the scam.

Talking to journalists at the secretariat yesterday, Muhith, however, said he would not quit.

BNP's five-point demand includes dismissal or resignation of suspected government and non-government officials involved in the sharemarket crash.

BNP chairperson's Adviser Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, also a former commerce minister, read out a written statement. Another adviser and former minister Osman Farrukh accompanied him.

Freezing the bank accounts of 12 masterminds, who have been named in the report, could be the first step of actions and they should not be allowed to leave the country.

An intensive investigation would be carried out into the matter if BNP is voted to power, mentioned the BNP leader.

observed Farrukh.

Amir Khasru said they demanded removal of finance minister and BB governor for their 'wrong policy, negligence and failure.'

Asked about some BNP leaders' suspected involvement, he said punishment should be meted out to them regardless of any party affiliation.

He, however, said the probe report is frustrating and questionable. "It cannot be acceptable to us as it hid the real perpetrators. Even around 33 lakh affected investors would not accept the report."

The former minister said the report, submitted by Ibrahim Khaled, attributed almost everything to the Securities and Exchange Commission. But it has no observation regarding the role of finance ministry, Bangladesh Bank and other policymakers.

During yesterday's hearing, defence counsel Munshi Ahsan Kabir said the safe house is in a residential area that lacks security and medical facilities.

Secular Ghulam Areef Tipoo whether the "Safe Home" is well-secured, Areef replied that it is safe.

The court warned the Dhaka Central Jail authorities for not paying proper attention to its order for making arrangements for interrogation and asked them to be more cautious in future.

## Hu meets Singh ahead of BRICS summit in China

AFP, Sanya

Chinese President Hu Jintao met Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday while Russian President Dmitry Medvedev discussed the Libya conflict with his South African counterpart Jacob Zuma.

Hu and Singh discussed "issues of common concern" on the eve of the BRICS summit of major emerging powers on south China's Hainan island, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Medvedev told Zuma their countries should work together to resolve armed conflicts including the one unfolding in Libya.

"I think the resolution of this and other conflicts depends on the level of coordination of our efforts," said the Russian leader.

Hu later held meetings with Zuma and Medvedev.

On Thursday, South Africa will for the first time join the BRICS summit, designed to showcase the growing economic and political clout of the world's major emerging powers, Brazil, Russia, India and China.

The meeting is expected focus on international questions, Libya and reform of the global financial system.

South Africa is the only country at the summit which supported a UN Security Council resolution establishing a no-fly zone over Libya and authorising "all necessary measures" to protect civilians, opening the door to coalition air strikes.

The four other countries have expressed their concern over the risk of civilian casualties.

Discussions between the five leaders are expected to conclude late morning with the release of a joint statement while the afternoon is reserved for bilateral meetings.

## Tigers put up a fight

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always backed, struck a classy unbeaten 68 batting at four for the first time in his career (and hopefully not his last).

The Tigers ended at 295-6 in 50 overs after Australia threatened to make a mockery of Bangladesh by making 361-5, losing the game by 66 runs. It was the third score of over 350 in less than a year (and sixth overall) against the Tigers as Michael Hussey struck a century true to his character in a continued display of batting belligerence.

Then it was the turn of Tigers opener Imrul who tore into the Australian attack getting a cue from his partner Tamim Iqbal, who made a 17-ball 32. After his brief flurry was ended by a Mitchell Johnson yorker, Imrul and Shahriar Nafees kept up the run-rate with some fine shots, particularly Imrul's fifth and sixth boundaries that came off consecutive Watson deliveries.

First Imrul unfurled a straight drive and followed it up with a punch through the covers. After batting woefully for a 41-ball 5 in the last game he showed a violent streak with a slogged six over mid-wicket. But his flashed drive at a wide James Pattinson ended his innings for 93, Imrul missing his second ODI hundred.

It also gave the young paceman his first international wicket and ended a 136-run second wicket stand, Bangladesh's highest ever against Australia. Nafees struck his second successive half-century but skied one to Watson off Johnson for an 86-ball 60 that had four boundaries.

Alok Kapali's return to the batting crease for the Tigers since September 2008 was completely overshadowed by Riyad's 61-ball knock (five fours and two sixes) that showed his growing temperament.

On April 5, the tribunal allowed the investigators to quiz Nizami and Mojahid inside Dhaka Central Jail in connection with 1971 war crimes.

Investigators visited the central jail and found that it lacks necessary facilities to interrogate the two accused. They filed a petition with the tribunal on Sunday to allow them to quiz the accused in a "Safe Home."

Meanwhile, the jail authorities sent a letter to the tribunal saying it was not possible for them to make arrangements for quizzing the Jamaat leaders at the jail gate.

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