

## Yemen forces shell Taez, kill one

AFP, Sanaa

Forces loyal to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh shelled several neighbourhoods across the flashpoint city of Taez, killing one person, medics and residents said yesterday.

The artillery shelling also destroyed nearly a dozen homes in Taez, Yemen's second-largest city, residents said.

The attacks were mainly concentrated in the area surrounding Al-Huriya Square, the epicentre of anti-regime protests since January.

A security official in Taez said the attacks targeted "militants from Al-Islah (reform opposition) party who have been deployed in residential areas across the city."

## Indigenous

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Echoing Larma, General Secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum Sanjeeb Drono said unrest may again flare in the hills if the accord is not implemented immediately.

Claiming that the hill people have been deceived, he stressed a dialogue between the government and indigenous leaders to devise a plan for the accord implementation.

Asked whether the hill people will go for another armed revolution if the demands are not met instantly, Larma said it would depend on the future.

In response to another query, he claimed that the United People's Democratic Front was formed under the patronisation of the then government, when the peace accord was signed. The organisation has been opposing the peace treaty from the very beginning, since its inception in 1998.

Columnist Syed Abul Maksud said it is obvious that the government which split the Dhaka City Corporation into two zones ignoring the opinion of 1.5 crore people will overlook the demands of 25-30 lakh people belonging to indigenous communities.

Veteran leftists Pankaj Bhattacharjee and other indigenous leaders were also present at yesterday's press conference.

## 2 advisers

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The issue of Tipaimukh hydroelectric project may come up in the discussion.

Rizvi, international affairs adviser, and Rahman, economic affairs adviser, are scheduled to meet Indian Power Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde and Water Resources Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal.

Power sector cooperation and sharing of the waters of common rivers like the Teesta and Feni are likely to come up for discussion between the two advisors and the Indian ministers.

The plan for setting up a thermal plant in Khulna and expediting the project for inter-connecting the grids of the two countries to facilitate power supply from India to Bangladesh is also expected to come up during talks between the advisors and Shinde.

Since Shinde was present when the Promoters' Agreement was signed on October 24 between Indian government-owned National Hydro Power Corporation and Manipur state government for the 1,500MW Tipaimukh project, the issue may figure in today's meeting, sources said.

While there has been widespread concern in Bangladesh over the possible effects of Tipaimukh project on the water flow of Barak river on the lower riparian country, India has made it repeatedly clear that nothing would be done which would hurt Dhaka's interests.

New Delhi has time and again assured Dhaka that Tipaimukh is a power-generating project which does not entail diversion of Barak water and so there is no question of reduction in the river water flow downstream.

The two advisers of Hasina will also meet Indian National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon today.

## PM defends

FROM PAGE 1

"The people against the division may have other intentions. In my view, they are against it for the sake of opposition, misleading the people and bringing the development activities of the government into question," said Hasina, citing examples of earlier criticism of her government's decision to subsidise quick rental power plants.

Claiming that her government had eradicated militancy and terrorist activities from the country, the premier said, "Maybe one day they [the critics] will ask why they don't hear the sounds of explosions any more or why there is no militancy. In reality, they want to mislead people and create confusion over good government activities."

She reiterated that the idea of Dhaka divided is absolutely wrong. In her assessment, Dhaka has already been divided into many parts as there are cantonment boards and 17 union parishes, which are not under DCC jurisdiction.

She said, "Splitting a city corporation is nothing new." She mentioned instances of two metropolitan corporations in London, four municipalities in Manila and a number of municipalities in Sydney.

Hasina also told parliament about the government's plan to split 19 greater districts of the country into 60, some eight constituencies into 15, and increase the number of police stations in the Dhaka Metropolitan area to 41 against the previous eight.

Referring to the sorry state of roads, drainage and sewerage system and the mosquito menace, the premier said,

"No one raised any voice when people died of dengue fever owing to the city corporation's failure in destroying mosquitoes."

The prime minister also criticised some lawmakers who yesterday expressed discontent at the Speaker's decision to drop other scheduled business of the House on Tuesday, which resulted in the passing of the DCC-split bill in just over four minutes.

Workers Party MP Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal's Mayeen Uddin Khan Badal and lone independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim were among the legislators who submitted proposals opposing the passage of the bill. They could not participate in the House proceedings, as the bill was passed hurriedly.

He added that the party would hold a protest rally in front of the BNP headquarters at Naya Paltan tomorrow and bring out processions in every ward on Saturday.

BNP leaders RA Gani, Khanakar Mosharraf Hossain, Moudud Ahmed and MK Anwar attended the meeting, among others.

Defying widespread criticism and protests, parliament on Tuesday hurriedly adopted a bill to divide the DCC.

They said they could have joined the House earlier had they known that the other scheduled business of the day would be dropped and the process to pass the bill would start ahead of the assumed on November 1.

In response, Speaker Abdul

**Mayor killing**

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Rahman Tawab alias Sabuj and Shaheen, who were arrested on November 19, were taken on fresh remands for four-day each.

Earlier on Tuesday, Narsingdi Jubo League president Ashraf Islami Sarkar, the lone FIR-named accused, confessed to his involvement in the murder on November 1.

Hazi Faruque was arrested from Wari in the capital on November 19, said a reliable source.

A source from the district detective branch of police hinted that important information had been extracted from Faruque. But the source did not divulge details of the information.

Meanwhile, the court police sub-inspector Anwar Hossain in his remand for warding said Kazi Alam was directly involved in the murder and he disclosed important information regarding the killing.

SI Anwar also said that two other arrestees-- Sabuj and Shaheen-- whose ten-day remand ended yesterday, also disclosed important information which would help to investigate the case.

Anwar sought another five-day remand for the duo.

Law enforcers so far arrested seven suspected killers in the case.

Some BNP lawmakers sent proposals to the parliament secretariat, protesting the passage of the bill for DCC split. But they could not raise the proposals during the debate.

The government's decision to split the DCC is nothing but a reflection of its autocratic and unrealistic attitude. It is meant for political gains and goes against people's interests, said the statement.

Water, power and gas crises in the city will worsen due to this move, it said.

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"We found that the highest deforestation rate is occurring in the tropical forests," said Adam Gerrard, Fao forestry officer for remote sensing.

"There is still deforestation occurring in Asia but there are trees being planted and those numbers are larger so there is a net increase," he said.

FAO worked on the report with more than 200 researchers from 102 countries.

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