

Tension rises in Afghan-Pak ties after attack

US urges Islamabad to act against extremists

AFP, Kabul

Afghanistan and Pakistan were locked in a war of words yesterday over a shrine bombing that killed at least 55 people in Kabul and which the Afghan government blamed on a Pakistani terror group.

Islamabad called for an end to the "blame game" after Kabul demanded action against the group, Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, whose purported claim of responsibility for Tuesday's attack has not been confirmed independently.

"It is high time to get out of the blame game as such and to move forward in the spirit of cooperation," said foreign office spokesman Abdul Basit.

"Publicly accusing Pakistan of unfounded events and things do create problems at some stage, he told reporters.

"We would like to have a relationship that is free of recrimination and blame game," Basit added.

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are tense, and frequently spiral into mutual accusations over the violence plaguing both their countries.

Kabul said yesterday that it was up to Pakistan to investigate without waiting any longer after Pakistan called for hard evi-

dence to support claims that Jhangvi was responsible.

Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, an outlawed militant group which has links to al-Qaeda and the Taliban, has been blamed for killing thousands of Shiites and whipping up sectarian hatred in Pakistan.

It also has reported links to Pakistani intelligence.

The United States on Wednesday urged greater action by Pakistan against a militant group that Afghanistan blamed for an unprecedented massacre against its Shia minority.

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the United States did not know the full details of the attacks but that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had Lashkar-e-Jhangvi in mind when she urged Pakistan to act against extremists during an October visit to Islamabad.

Pointing out that Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has been blamed for attacks in Pakistan as well, Toner said, "It's just too important, the threat we face. There needs to be ongoing, sustained and even increased cooperation and coordination between Afghanistan (and) Pakistan and certainly with the international community".



Participants of the Bali Democracy Forum pose for a group photo during the opening on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on December 8, 2011. Front row, left to right, are Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc, Mongolia's Prime Minister Sukhbaatar Batbold, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani, Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, Sri Lanka's President of Socialist Republic Mahinda Rajapaksa, East Timorese Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, Philippines' Vice President Jejomar Binay.

Ulfa warns against army ops in Assam

PTI, Guwahati

At least six persons were injured by unidentified persons claiming to be Ulfa in Tinsukia district, officials said yesterday.

The assailants armed with sophisticated sharp weapons attacked people at Jagun along the Assam-Bangladesh border and injured six of them seriously last night.

They left the spot after claiming themselves to be Ulfa cadres, they said.

The army and police have launched massive operation to track them out, they said.

Ulfa Paresw Baruah faction yesterday warned, "Indians residing in Assam will have to face the effect of the colonial force's operations on the indigenous people".

Reach legally binding deal

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Hasan said millions of people around the globe are facing the devastating impacts of climate change, and they expect that Durban will adopt decisions on mitigation that reflects the findings of the IPCC Special Report on Extreme Events.

Referring to the recent report of IPCC, he said every country is facing increasing climate disasters--both in frequency and magnitude. However, the LDCs, SIDS and Africa are being hit hardest, and these countries are innocent victims of climate change.

Bangladesh attaches enormous importance on a legally

binding outcome, he said adding that Durban decisions will help all operationalise the Cancun Adaptation Framework and its governance structures to ensure allocation of climate finance.

For the period of 2013-2019, the minister said, developed nations (Annex I parties) should provide additional resources on an incremental basis every year from 2013 to reach \$ 100 billion per year by 2020 and expressed the hope that the work of the Transitional Committee in this regard will be adopted at COP17.

He said Bangladesh, with its extremely limited finan-

cial resources, has already allocated over \$300 million of its own resources under the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund to implement the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, adopted in early 2009.

Echoing the struggle of great leaders Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela who fought for the rights of the oppressed, he said the Durban climate summit will produce a desired outcome of climate deal for which millions of people are looking for.

The 12-day global climate talks that started in Durban on Nov 28 is expected to end today.

It's extorted money

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the Special Judge's Court-3, and said he unearthed the laundering of Tk 20.41 crore by the two while probing an extortion case filed by Nirman Construction Ltd Chairman Khadiza Islam against them on May 9, 2007.

Nirman Construction Ltd, being the lowest bidder, was primarily selected for the job to install a power plant in Tongi, said Alimuzzaman, officer-in-charge of Dhobaura Police Station in Mymensingh.

But the firm was told that it would not get the job unless Tarique, elder son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, and Mamun are paid \$750,000, said the witness.

Later, Khadiza went to Singapore and opened a savings account with OCBC Bank, and then sent the amount to Mamun's account with the Citi Bank through

Telegraph Transfer (TT).

The judge adjourned yesterday's hearing, and fixed January 3 for cross examination of witnesses.

The court earlier took the testimony of Hosne Ara Begum, the then officer-in-charge of Cantonment Police Station, who recorded the case against Tarique and Mamun for laundering Tk 20.41-crore to a Singapore bank. Mohammad Ibrahim, assistant director of Anti-Corruption Commission, filed the case on October 26, 2009.

Mamun was present at the court, while Tarique is in London now. Tarique was detained on March 7, 2007, but allowed to go abroad for treatment the next year.

An FBI agent on November 16 testified in the money laundering case, and narrated how she had tracked down the money laundered allegedly by the duo.

7 initiatives for true democracy

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Hasina's seven-point proposal include decentralisation of local self-government with adequate authority and finances to execute the plans and regional cooperation and utilisation of the resources available, including freer movement of people including labour for the benefit of each region.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono inaugurated the programme.

The premier, a co-chair of the forum, said that she had always struggled for democracy as she believes that only this can empower people, ensure progress and establish an impartial system of justice.

Referring to her resolution "People's

Empowerment" introduced in the 66th UNGA session this year for adoption, she said it reaffirms that all people be treated equally, emphasising the scope of human potential that can be realised through peace and democracy.

Hasina said the theme of the forum is most appropriate at a time when increasing number of the world's population is demanding democracy as their preferred form of government.

"Time has come for nations to discard their old practices, and embrace the new voice of freedom, democracy and human rights," she said.

Later, during a Joint Press Statement with Indonesian president at

the auditorium of the Westin Hotel, Hasina said when the big countries across the globe are facing serious economic recession, at that time Indonesia is advancing fast with their strong economy.

Replying to a question, Susilo said that Bali Democracy Forum is not a forum that will force a country for establishing democracy or define the democracy.

"We are here to discuss, and from our discussion we will learn from each other," he said.

Sultan Hasnal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa, among others, spoke at the opening session of the two-day Bali Democracy Forum IV.

60 Hindus forced

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Wednesday and resumed and completed giving his testimony yesterday. He is the second prosecution witness to testify against Sayedee, who has been charged with crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 war.

Detained Sayedee, 71, was present in the dock of the tribunal during the testimony.

A three-judge tribunal led by its Chairman Justice Nizamul Huq recorded the testimony of Nabin. It fixed December 11 for cross-examination of Nabin and Mahabubul Alam Hawlader, who completed his deposition Wednesday.

There are 66 more prosecution witnesses yet to testify in the case.

Nabin yesterday narrated how during the Liberation War Sayedee helped the Pakistani occupation forces loot valuables from Awami League activists, freedom fighters and the Hindu community in Pirojpur.

The Pakistani occupation forces went to Pirojpur district on May 3, 1971. Around 52 members of the force arrived in 26 rickshaws in Parer Haat area of Pirojpur on May 7, Nabin told the court, a fact which supports the statement of Hawlader.

Sekandar Ali Shikder, Danesh Ali Mollah, Mawlana Mosleh Uddin and Sayedee, among other collaborators, welcomed the Pakistani force led by one Cap Ejaz. Fluent Urdu speaker Sayedee managed to form a close and friendly relationship with the Pakistani occupation forces, Nabin said, echoing Hawlader's statement.

With the help of collaborators, the Pakistani force looted over 50 houses and shops in the area, including the shop of a local businessman Makhani who had around 20kg of gold (22-sheer) and silver jewellery buried under his shop.

They looted eight more houses in Pirojpur's Badura Chithalia village the follow-

ing day and torched them, he said.

"On a Thursday sometime in mid-June, I took a boat to Parer Haat to gather rations for freedom fighters...It was a haat day [weekly bazaar]...I stood in front of Masud's store and observed the atmosphere of the surrounding area," Nabin said.

It was then that he saw Sayedee in the distance. "He was wearing a panjabi and lungi," said Nabin, adding, "He carried a corrugated iron sheet in one hand, and brass utensils in a wooden basket on his head."

Nabin watched Sayedee, then known as Delawar Hossain Shikder, make his way to a shop, which used to be known as "Panch Tahabil".

He directed passerby Moulvi Nurul Haque's attention towards Sayedee and said, "See, Delawar Saheb is taking away the loot."

Nabin, who carried a revolver then, turned angry and told Nurul Haque, "I will shoot this robber right now!"

"Nurul Haque stopped me and said if I created a scene the Pakistani occupation forces would torch the remaining houses too and commit genocide."

Nabin then made his way towards another shop in the bazaar area where he learnt from locals that Madan Saha's shop had been looted. He then saw Sayedee appear with five men. They began demolishing Madan Saha's shop.

The looted goods were then taken to Sayedee's father-in-law's house in the area, Nabin said.

According to Nabin, the collaborators took over two shops in Parer Haat to store the booty. Sayedee was in charge of the shops, he said.

Nabin told the court that during their stay in Parer Haat the Pakistani occupation forces raped a number of girls with the help of the collaborators.

The collaborators also forced 50 to 60 Hindus to convert to Islam. The vic-

tims included Rony Saha, Makhani Saha, Dr Ganesh Chandra, Dr Sudhir Chandra Roy, Gouranga and Ajit Chandra Roy, he added.

"Everyday, they were taken to mosques and forced to pray five times. They were also forced to learn two to four suras [verses of the holy Quran] and were provided with materials for prayers."

Unable to accept the insult, many of them escaped to India, he added.

On June 21, 1971, Nabin along with a number of freedom fighters went to India to receive guerrilla training. On his return, he took part in armed warfare against the Pakistani occupation forces, Nabin said.

Along with his fellow

freedom fighters, Nabin returned to Parer Haat on December 18. The freedom fighters then searched different houses to get hold of the collaborators.

While some were arrested, identified collaborators like Danesh Ali, Maulana Mosleh Uddin and Sayedee could not be apprehended, he said. "We came to know that they had fled," Nabin told the court.

Some looted goods were recovered from the houses of the collaborators. They were handed back to their original owners.

On behalf of the freedom fighters and the victims of the atrocities committed during the Liberation War by the Pakistani occupation forces, Nabin pleaded for justice.

Jordan jobs made tough

FROM PAGE 20

workers returned home recently as the garments factory that had employed them -- Maintrend International -- closed down following a series of strikes. Over 100 Bangladeshi male workers of the factory filed a case seeking compensation from the factory owners.

Bangladeshi workers along with Jordanian and Chinese workers of the factory went on a strike for nearly a month from mid-September. Earlier in June, around 700 workers of the factory had gone on a strike, which is illegal in Jordan.

The demands of the workers included an end to beatings, forced deportation if workers cannot reach mandatory production goals and arbitrary wage cuts, and better dormitories and adequate toilet facilities.

Moreover, the US-based Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights reported sexual abuses of Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan female workers by managers of Classic Fashion Apparel Industry Ltd, Jordan's largest garment exporter to the US.

Classic recruited around 2,000 Bangladeshi workers.

In June this year, a female worker from Bangladesh complained to Jordanian police that a Sri Lankan manager of Classic, Anil Santha, raped her twice in March and May at a hotel in Irbid, a Jordanian city bordering Syria.

Santha, 46, charged with rape by Jordanian prosecutors, faces up to 15 years in prison, if convicted. He denied the allegations.

There were also some cases regarding sexual abuse of Sri Lankan female workers

by Classic managers.

The Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights said Classic managers raped at least 300 young workers since 2007.

It has also launched an international online campaign demanding protection of foreign workers in Jordan, removal of abusive factory managers and compensation for raped workers.

According to an official at the Bangladesh mission in Amman, 49 Bangladeshi female workers ran away from Classic following publication of reports of sexual abuse.

Requesting anonymity, another official said a Bangladeshi national, Rafiqul Islam, involved with the labour rights watchdog in Amman, instigated female workers to escape and make false allegations in

exchange for big amounts of money. Classic filed a case against him in this regard.

Some other Bangladeshi male workers were also involved in such instigation, the official said.

Against this backdrop, the Jordan authorities have become very cautious about recruiting workers from Bangladesh, he added.

Jordan, which is now has around 30,000 Bangladeshi workers, had banned recruiting workers from Bangladesh in 2006. Last year, it relaxed the ban allowing recruitment of only female workers in garment factories, but now that also appears to have come to a halt.

Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Zafar Ahmed Khan is going to Jordan for talks on the issue with the Jordanian authorities, officials said.



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Time: 11 AM - 3:30 PM

Chittagong Venue:
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Date: 12 Dec '11
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