

Pakistan battle kills '1 soldier, 25 insurgents'

AFP, Peshawar

Dozens of militants ambushed Pakistani troops yesterday, killing a soldier and sparking clashes that left up to 25 insurgents dead in the Taliban-infested tribal badlands, officials said.

Members of the Frontier Corps paramilitary were attacked while driving through the Mamuzai area of Orakzai, the stronghold of Hakimullah Meshud, the leader of the nebulous Pakistani Taliban faction.

The were ambushed at around 7:30am and ensuing clashes lasted around 40 minutes, the official said.

Home financiers

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Although realtors complain about lean periods, the loan providers said there is no dearth of applications.

"The demand for financing has increased substantially," said Rahaman. He however could not give any statistics.

"Many developers, particularly reputed firms, are still doing pretty good business," said Eusuf. "Those who have trust-issues, are facing the setback."

The loan recovery rate is good -- over 98 percent for both the lenders.

Police yet to

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Gazipur on Thursday, a day after he was abducted from the capital's Mohammadpur area.

"We have collected the call list of Nazmul's cell phone to ascertain whether he was kidnapped from Mohammadpur or somewhere else," Anwar Hossain, a sub-inspector of Mohammadpur Police Station, said yesterday.

SI Anwar is investigating the kidnapping incident as a General Diary was lodged with the police station.

As the body was recovered from an area under Joydevpur Police Station, a murder case in this connection might be lodged there, Anwar added.

Meanwhile, A S Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Joydevpur Police Station, said "We contacted with Nazmul's family in Jhikorgachha for the sake of investigation. They informed us that they are now busy with burial and will contact us later."

Nazmul's eldest son Sadman Alvi Rifat told The Daily Star over the phone from Jhikorgachha that his father was buried yesterday afternoon, and they were not in a state to contact the police for filing cases.

OC Kamruzzaman said they were carrying out investigation but none was detained in connection with the killing.

War heroes

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wheel chairs and educational materials at the function. The 10 freedom fighters were also honoured in the programme attended, among others, by teachers, cultural activists and local representatives.

The freedom fighters urged all, including their comrades of the Liberation War, to come forward and work for the development of the special-needs children to ensure their freedom.

Abducted girl

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Family sources said Shrabanti used to live at her grandfather's house close to her school.

On Monday she took an examination at the school. On her way back home, family relative Kalim Uddin along with some other youths forcibly took her to a microbus and fled the scene.

Later the abductors phoned her family members and demanded Tk 6 lakh as ransom.

Around 6:30am yesterday police recovered the body tied in a sack.

Talking to The Daily Star, victim's father Rabiu Islam said he could not meet the ransom demand as he is a poor man. He demanded exemplary punishment to the killers.

Law enforcers suspect terrorists killed Shrabanti and dumped her body under the bridge on Thursday night.

A case was filed with Jhenaidah Sadar Police Station in this regard.

18 kids aspiring

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three groups -- A, B and C. The draw of group A and C will be held on December 26 while of group-B the following day.

The written test for group-A will be held tomorrow while for group-B on December 19 and group-C on December 20. Every school will arrange the test in its own facilities.

The list of schools under group A, B and C are incorporated at the end of this report.

Between December 5 and 13, a total of 69,767 forms had been sold against 7,551 seats in 24 public schools of the capital, said Prof Shafiqur Rahman, director of DSHE.

Each form was sold at Tk 100, he said, adding that last year the number of forms sold stood at 72,416.

Outside Dhaka, the district committees, upazila committees and school managing committees of state-run schools will conduct the lottery as per their own schedules.

The lottery system for admission was introduced last year in the government high schools that have the elementary level. A few private schools in the capital had already been practising the system.

On Thursday, the government brought the admission to Class-I in all private schools under the lottery scheme.

However, for enrolment in Class-II to -IX in public or private schools, students have to sit for a 100-mark written test on Bangla, English and Mathematics.

Viqarunnisa Noon School, a private school, will hold the admission lottery today from 8:00 a.m. Likewise, Motijheel Ideal School will also hold the draw today for the first time.

The other private schools

in the capital have already finished distribution of forms and interviews to verify students' age. They will hold their admission lotteries on December 18 and 19.

Group-A

Govt Laboratory School, Mirpur Govt High School, Motijheel Govt Girls' High School, Khilgaon Govt High School, Islamia Govt High School, Nawabpur Govt High School, S S Ch o o l, Mohammadpur Govt High School and New Govt Girls' High School.

Group-B

Motijheel Govt Boys' High School, Narinda Govt High School, Govt Muslim High School, Banglazabazar Govt Girls' High School, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Govt Boys' High School, Govt Bigyan College High School, Dhanmondi Govt Girls' High School and Dhanmondi Kamrunessa Govt Girls' High School.

Group-C

Dhanmondi Govt Boys' High School, Armanitola Govt High School, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Govt Girls' High School, Tejgaon Govt Girls' High School, Dhaka Collegiate School, Gonobhaban Govt High School and Tejgaon Govt High School.

GRADES FORMS SOLD

GRADES	FORMS SOLD
I	27,934
II	8,613
III	9,163
IV	2,981
V	2,899
VI	10,818
VII	1,839
VIII	2,146
IX	3,374
Total	69,767

5 abducted

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seven bodies amid allegations that some of them had been picked up by plainclothes personnel of law enforcement agencies.

Fishermen in Barguna on December 11 came across at least seven bodies floating in the deep sea, about 160 km southeast of Pathorghata upazila in the district.

Meanwhile, family members of the Faridpur victims at a press conference on Thursday said they were frustrated at the police failure in rescuing their boys. They demanded that the police "act faster".

Rafiqul Islam, nephew of Rubel Kha, said at the press conference that one Nirob of Aligadha village under Nagarkanda upazila called Sobhan over the phone around 2:30 p.m. on December 6, asking him to go to Maligram Bazar.

As Sobhan along with Rubel, Belayet and Fayed reached there, the gang hustled the four in a microbus.

Informed by Fayed over the phone, Kiyum, accompanied by Asad Sikder, rushed to the scene to rescue them, Rafiqul added.

But they, too, were forced in the microbus, Asad, who was dropped near Bakhunda on Dhaka-Barisal highway two hours later, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Aged around 35, the six kidnappers, including the driver, were wearing black coats, Asad said, adding that the microbus drove towards Faridpur town.

On picking them up, he said, the abductors blindfolded all but him. When he protested and demanded to be released, the kidnappers punched him in the face and other parts of the body.

Asad, a rural medical practitioner, claimed the kidnappers freed him as he pleaded for his life.

Rubel's mother Rashida Begum told reporters that the abductors demanded Tk 10 lakh in ransom for the five, which they could not manage.

Dadon Fakir, officer-in-charge of Bhanga Police Station, said the missing youths might be members of local groups that cheat people over the phone, and that they might have been kidnapped by rival groups.

Victims' family members, however, said their boys were

never involved with those groups.

Locally known as "Welcome Party", members of these groups call people identifying themselves as officials of mobile phone operators. They then tell the receiver that he has won a lottery. But to get the prize money, he should send a certain amount of money to a certain mobile number.

On receiving the money, the gang, which has been operating in the area for several years, sells the SIM card to telephone recharge shops, police said.

Contacted for comments about the abduction, Additional Superintendent of Police of Faridpur Bijoy Basak said, "We've names of four people, including Nirob, who might be involved in the abduction. We're trying our best to arrest them."

Jui's husband Rafiqul Islam, 25, an expatriate worker in the UAE, hacked off her right hand with a machete on December 4 as she wanted to pursue studies defying her husband's objections.

Rafiqul is now behind bars.

Jui, a college student, was taken to her Narsingdi home after receiving treatment in the capital's Orthopaedic Hospital.

Meantime, Narsingdi lawmaker Nurul Islam Hira yesterday visited Jui's residence to express his sympathy and gave Tk 10,000 to the ill-fated girl.

Hundreds of people are thronging Jui's residence every day to express empathy with her.

Jyoti world's

FROM PAGE 20

AFP: "She's 62.8 centimetres.

She was measured three times over the last 24 hours as height can vary slightly according to the time of day."

Doctors measured her in our presence at three different times, both standing up and lying down. We took an average."

Amge, who is currently also the world's shortest teenager, wept with joy as she was presented with a certificate watched by her father, Kisan, 55, and mother, Ranjana, 50.

The teenager, wearing a traditional sari, said: "I'm very happy to get this record."

Molloy said he was honoured to witness the record: "It's such a symbolic record and one of the most popular."

"I've worked at Guinness World Records for eight years and I feel quite proud that I was the one to oversee the presentation of the certificate."

Amge, who has a form of achondroplasia that has restricted her height to that of an average four-month-old baby girl, has just finished her high school exams.

She has expressed hopes of becoming a Bollywood actress, her father said.

The previous holder of the world's shortest living woman title was 69.49-centimetre-tall (two foot, three inch) Bridgette Jordan, from the US state of Illinois, Molloy said.

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terrorists killed Shrabanti and dumped her body under the bridge on Thursday night.

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Administrator

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"The appointment of district council administrators is absolutely undemocratic and unconstitutional. Local government bodies have to be run by elected representatives, but the government violated this constitutional provision," he told newsmen after placing floral wreaths at the grave of party founder late president Ziaur Rahman.

The government has already violated the constitution by splitting Dhaka City Corporation into two and appointing administrators to the corporations, mentioned Fakhrul adding, it has repeated the same thing regarding the district councils.

"The nation is observing the Victory Day today [Friday] and taking oath to establish democracy in the country by ending the present suffocating situation," noted the BNP leader.

He also alleged that BNP chairperson's motorcade to the National Memorial was halted for a long time. "The leader of the opposition could not pay respects to the martyrs properly due to the mismanagement of the authorities."

Senior BNP leaders led by Chairperson Khaleda Zia placed floral wreaths at the grave of Zia and offered Fateha.

Earlier the party chief paid homage to the martyrs of Liberation War at the National Memorial at Savar. Leaders and activists of the party's front and associate bodies were also present.

The government on Thursday appointed 61 district council administrators, most of whom are local leaders of the ruling Awami League.

McKinsey

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consultant for many of the world's influential businesses and institutions, has done a case study that reviews Bangladesh's garment growth formula. It predicts that the country's apparel exports will double by 2015 and nearly triple within a 10-year horizon. The report, prepared in collaboration with the Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry and made available exclusively to The Daily Star, explores what it takes to be the next big destination for global buyers. Watch out for the full report on Monday.

People join

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formed on the Court Road of the city as part of a series of demonstrations.

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Gaddafi's

FROM PAGE 20

Mobile phone footage showed both alive after their capture. The former Libyan leader was seen being mocked, beaten and abused before he died, in what NTC officials said was crossfire.

The UN Security Council referred Gaddafi's crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators to the ICC in February and authorized military intervention to protect civilians in March.

The ICC indicted Gaddafi, his son Saif al-Islam and the former intelligence chief for warcrimes.

Saif al-Islam is now in the

custody of the Libyan

authorities who have said</