

Yemen raid kills Qaeda militants

AFP, Sanaa

A Yemeni air raid yesterday in the country's eastern province of Hadramawt killed seven al-Qaeda militants, including the local military chief, a security official said.

The raid struck the group as they met in a "deserted coastal area" some 60 kilometres (35 miles) west of the city of Mukalla, the official told AFP, adding that the militants included al-Qaeda's local military chief Saleh Abdul Khaleq.

In an apparent indication that the air force had been tipped off about the meeting, the official said that militants were in a leafy area "under trees," adding that the raid was conducted by Yemeni warplanes, not US drones.

An American drone yesterday killed five Qaeda militants when it struck a convoy in the area of Manaseh, east of the city of Radaa in central Yemen, according to a tribal source.

CHT

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At its fourth meeting, the committee agreed to place a bill for amending the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act, 2001, in the current budget session of parliament.

At the last meeting, the national committee on implementation of Chittagong Hill Tracts peace accord had finalised a draft for amending the 2001 act with 13 proposals, but the land ministry sought fresh opinion on three proposals.

At yesterday's meeting, the committee withdrew the proposal for handing over the functions of land commission to CHT affairs ministry, but stuck to the other two points, said Santu Larma, chief of pro-peace body Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and also a member of the committee.

He said, "Instead of taking any effective steps to implement the accord, the state rulers have been deceiving the hill people for the last 14 years. If the government does not pay attention to this, the longstanding problems in CHT may get worse."

Nothing significant had happened since the peace accord was signed between the government and PCJSS in 1997, alleged Larma.

After the meeting, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury said they had almost completed the tasks for amending the land commission act. The bill might be placed in the House after discussions with the prime minister.

Asked whether the land commission would be instructed to keep its activities stalled as it had stirred controversy among the hill people, she said it would also be finalised after consultation with the premier.

Santu Larma said he had also informed the committee about the "criminal activities" of the United People's Democratic Front and asked to government to ban the outfit, which to him, was working against the treaty at direct support of some quarters in the government.

He said the committee chair had taken the responsibility to convey the issue to the top echelon of the state.

Jatindra Lal Tripura, chairman of Task Force on Repatriation of Refugees also attended yesterday's meeting. Prime minister's adviser on foreign affairs Gowher Rizvi was also present there on special invitation.

Tension brewed afresh in the hills after the CHT land dispute resolution commission had announced that it might hear cases by way of "special measures" due to repeated crisis of quorum for its meetings. Regional political parties are reported to be preparing to resist the commission move. Commission members from hill communities have been boycotting the commission proceedings since February 2011, demanding an amendment to the 2001 act that set up the commission.

The three political parties in the region, the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti, the United People's Democratic Front and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (MN Larma) said they would not accept any such move.

Nizami finally

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killing and genocide committed during the Liberation War.

During the war, Nizami was the president of Pakistan ICS (now Islami Chhatra Shibir), which formed Al Badr, a band of collaborators, infamous for orchestrating the killing of intellectuals, according to historical records.

Nizami took an opportunity yesterday to address the Tribunal-1 as, after reading out of the charges against him, it asked whether he pleaded guilty or not.

Otherwise, the man who for decades has been one of the country's most recognised war crimes suspect sat quietly in the dock, intently listening to his charges read before him.

"I want to clearly say that my role during the Liberation War did not extend beyond the sphere of political activities," he told the tribunal.

The "tragic incident" would not have taken place if the country's power was handed over to the elected representatives of 1970 general election in the then East Pakistan, he said.

The Jamaat chief, however, did not say his definition of the "tragic incident".

"This is a matter of investigation that whether Bhutto saheb used Yahya Khan or Yahya Khan used Bhutto [in 1971]," he told the tribunal.

In 1971, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the chief of Pakistani Peoples Party (PPP), which opposed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman-led Awami League's taking over power even after the AL won majority in 1970 national assembly polls.

Yahya Khan, the Pakistan military dictator who was then the president of Pakistan, also refused to hand over state power to Awami League. Instead, he launched mass killing and genocide against Bangladeshes on the night of March 25, 1971.

"We had no link to creating the situation of genocide at that time," Nizami said. "Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the Nayak [key person] of the genocide."

Out of the 16 charges brought against Nizami, four pointed fingers at the Jamaat ameer for making speeches inciting members of Razakar, Al Badr and other auxiliary forces to commit atrocities during the Liberation War.

Nizami told the court yesterday that the speeches mentioned in the charges were taken from newspapers.

He said he had visited some places and delivered speeches in 1971 as the president of ICS. However, he did not "own" all his statements published in newspapers.

The Sangram, mouthpiece of Jamaat-e-Islami, quoted Nizami on September 15, 1971, as saying: "Everyone of us should assume the role of a Muslim soldier of an Islamic state, and through cooperation to the oppressed and by winning their confidence we must kill those, who are hatching conspiracies

Libya

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cross-check. As the embassy okayed it, we issued clearance," she said.

First Secretary (labour) of Bangladesh embassy in Tripoli Ahsan Kibria Siddiqui, contacted over the phone on Sunday, said the Libyan authorities claimed the visas were forged by syndicates outside the Libyan embassy in Dhaka.

Ahsan said he held meetings with officials of the Libyan High Security Commission and requested them to verify authenticity of the visas, but the commission chief said their findings were right.

Commission officials said syndicates both in Bangladesh and Libya are involved in forging visas, Ahsan mentioned.

He pointed out that the Libyan immigration arrested 76 Bangladeshi job seekers at Benghazi airport on April 24 on suspicion that they were carrying fake visas, but a day later handed them over to their employers.

Around 500 jobseekers are now seeking emigration clearance for going to Libya. The BMET is observing the situation in that country, and is not issuing clearance for now. About 2,500 workers have been sent there after the civil war.

against Pakistan and Islam."

About other charges including murder and torture, Nizami said the incidents took place neither in his presence nor with his knowledge.

"I don't think there is any scope of accusing someone of war crimes for his political role," he said.

Wasfia

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month. The 29-year-old started her expedition on March 26, the day of Bangladesh's independence, as part of her "Bangladesh on Seven Summits" campaign.

Meanwhile, Nishat, the first Bangladeshi woman to conquer the world's highest peak, reached Lukla on Sunday.

Along with fellow mountaineer MA Mohit, she mounted the Everest on May 19.

Enam Ul Haque, president of Bangladesh Mountaineering and Trekking Club that organised the event, said there was no flight from Lukla yesterday due to bad weather.

"I talked with them and they are well," said Enam.

On her feeling, Wasfia said it was a tremendous achievement to be the second Bangladeshi woman to be on the top of the world.

This year is one of the toughest expedition years. Due to rough weather condition, many climbers were hurt while several others went missing.

"The weather on the Everest was very rough this year, otherwise I could reach the summit on May 18 or May 25," she said.

She climbed the mountain with two sherpas -- Nima Girmam Dorje and Kusang Sherpa -- but on her way down only Kusang accompanied her.

A rights activist, Wasfia said she wanted to contribute to the country's cause for fighting climate change.

Of the four Bangladeshis who scaled the Everest so far, Wasfia is the youngest.

Earlier, she became the first Bangladeshi woman to reach the highest peak of Africa, the Uhuru peak of Mt Kilimanjaro at 5,895 metres altitude in Tanzania.

She reached the summit of Mount Aconcagua in Argentina on December 16 last year.

Mohit is the only Bangladeshi to scale the mountain twice. He first topped the peak on May 21 last year.

Bangladesh entered the list of Everest conquerors with Musa Ibrahim raising high the red-green flag on the mountaintop on May 23, 2010.

Brutal attack

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told The Daily Star that the two injured journalists had been rushed to United Hospital in Gulshan.

Sub-editor Newaz Mohammed Rifaat and reporter Salahuddin Wahid Pritom sustained serious stab injuries in their legs. Doctors said they were out of danger.

Mohsinul Karim, a senior reporter of the online news portal, said criminals attacked office assistant Ruhul Amin around 8:30pm when he was in front of the building, keeping an eye on some office stuff kept outside to be shifted to their new office.

As Ruhul cried out for help, his colleagues around came to the rescue, caught one of the youths and secured them including the youth captured inside closing the shutter on the ground floor. They were preparing to call police.

Several minutes later, a group of 15-20 youths armed with sharp weapons, iron rods and sticks forcibly opened the shutter and attacked the newsmen and other staff of bdnews24.com.

A few minutes later the criminals left with their captured friend.

Members of Rab and police visited the spot. Duty officer of Banani Police Station told The Daily Star around 1:30am today that they were raiding at different spots but got no lead yet.

Unipay2u

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On May 6, police arrested the company's Managing Director Muntasir Hossain Emon, 37, and its General Manager Jamshedur Rahman, 50, on the charges of swindling people. Police are now interrogating them.

Dozens of MLM companies have been in operation in the country since 1998 when Global Guardian Network (GGN) introduced MLM business in Bangladesh. Another MLM company Destiny started its operation in 2000, and following its success, many fraudsters started MLM business in the country.

Unipay2u Bangladesh started off in 2009 with an announcement that if anyone invested in the company, the amount would double in just 10 months. The MLM company on its website said it had invested in gold mines in Africa, Europe and the USA, though it was illegal without the central bank's permission.

Unipay2u Members' Club Ltd, a platform for aggrieved investors of the MLM company, alleged that the top management of Unipay2u Bangladesh swindled six lakh people out of nearly Tk 6,000 crore between October 2009 and January 2011.

Following media reports in 2011, the central bank froze 110 bank accounts of Unipay2u. The Anti-Corruption Commission also filed a case against the company officials for swindling people.

SI Sihab Uddin at a press briefing in the morning said they arrested Mukit on information from some aggrieved investors of the MLM company.

Mukit, however, claimed himself innocent and told journalists, "I joined the company seven months after the government froze its bank accounts."

Meanwhile, the parliamentary standing committee on public assurance asked the commerce, finance and home ministries to take action against the MLM companies that are cheating people.

Govt asked

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the policemen who assaulted three photojournalists of the daily.

Kamrul Hasan, Prothom Alo's special correspondent, told The Daily Star that similar letters were also sent to the state minister for home, the home secretary and the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner for taking departmental action against the accused policemen.

In his letter, Matiur Rahman narrated the assault and expressed his concern over such attack.

Contacted, IGP Hassan Mahmood Khandker admitted to receiving the letter.

Photojournalists Khaled Sarkar, Sajid Hossain and Zahidul Karim were badly injured when policemen led by Assistant Commissioner Shahidul Islam of Tejgaon division swooped on them at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital on Saturday.

The incident happened as the photojournalists were taking photos of a demonstration staged by the students of Dhaka Women Polytechnic Institute.

The police authorities suspended 10 policemen, including Shahidul Islam, following the incident.

The Prothom Alo editor wrote to the government and police authorities after the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police refused to take a criminal case in this connection that evening, sources said.

When on Saturday evening Nasirul Islam, a staff photographer of bdnews24.com, and several other journalists went to the police station for filing a case on behalf of the three victims, the duty officer refused to record the case.

Asked why, the IGP suggested that this correspondent contact the DMP commissioner.

The DMP commissioner could not be reached over the phone despite repeated attempts.

However, Zakir Hossain Mollah, officer-in-charge of the station, said: "The case was not recorded as the 10 policemen were already suspended and a committee was formed to investigate the matter."



Sunirmal Roy, who was seriously injured by abductors Sunday, lies in the bed of Mitford Hospital in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Doctor tricked

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and two legs, was now under treatment at the Mitford Hospital.

According to police, hospital sources and relatives, two persons came to Sunirmal's private chamber near Sir Salimullah Medical College and Mitford Hospital on Sunday afternoon.

They requested him to go with them to see a critical patient at Kadamtoli in Keraniganj, on the other side of the Buriganga.

In the evening, the doctor's relatives received phone calls saying that Sunirmal had been abducted. The abductors demanded Tk 20 lakh in ransom.

The relatives immediately contacted the hospital authorities, who then informed police about the matter.

As advised by police, the relatives agreed to pay the ransom when the abductors called them again. Accordingly, one of the

kidnappers came to a particular place at Azimpur to collect the money, and police arrested him.

Contacted, director of Mitford hospital Brig Gen AKM Fariduzzaman said Sunirmal was in a state of mental shock and unwilling to say anything about the incident now.

The duty officer at Kotwali police station said the doctor filed a case around 11:00pm yesterday, accusing nine persons, four of them unnamed.

Quader Mollah

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The International Crimes Tribunal-2, led by Chairman ATM Fazle Kabir, drew up the indictment.

Yesterday's was the first charge framing by the Tribunal-2 against any war crimes suspect since its formation on March 22.

The tribunal fixed June 20 for hearing of the opening statement from the prosecution and examination of prosecution witness. It also directed the defence counsels to submit the list of their witnesses and other documents by the day.

"The proceedings shall continue on every working day until further order," the court said.

The tribunal charged Quader Mollah, considering his role during the war as a leader of Jamaat's student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha, a significant member of auxiliary force Al Badr or a member of a group of individuals.

Mollah, the then president of Dhaka University Shahidullah Hall unit Chhatra Sangha, organised the formation of Al-Badar with the members of the student body in 1971, the court said.

Yesterday, Justice ATM Fazle Kabir started his one-hour long order with a brief introduction. Later, he said about formation of the tribunal, historical context of independence, brief profile of the accused, procedural history, submission of prosecution and defence side, discussion and decision and the charges.

Quader Mollah, now assistant secretary general of Jamaat, was born in Amirabad village under Sadarpur of Faridpur in 1948. He was arrested on charges of killing 345 people during the war on July 13, 2010. Later, he was shown arrested in a case for crimes against humanity committed in 1971.

The prosecution on December 18 last year submitted formal charges against him before Tribunal-1, which took the charges into cognisance on December 28.

On April 16, the case was transferred to Tribunal-2, where both the prosecution and the defence placed their submission on May 2, 8, 9, 14 and 16.

The tribunal on May 16 fixed yesterday for passing the indictment order.

CHARGES

On Quader Mollah's instruction, one of his aides named Akhter killed Pallab, a student of Bangla

College and an organiser of the Liberation War, on April 5, 1971.

Pallab was buried by the side of Kalapani Jheel along with several other bodies.

A group of anti-liberation people forcibly brought Pallab to Quader Mollah at Mirpur-12. From there, on the Jamaat leader's order, they dragged the youth to Shah Ali Majar at Mirpur-1, said the charge.

Pallab was then taken to an Eidgah at Mirpur-12, where he was shot to death.

On March 27, 1971, Quader Mollah and his aides murdered pro-liberation poet Meherun Nesa, her mother and two brothers at their house at Mirpur-6.

Quader Mollah accompanied by other members of Al Badr, Razakar and non-Bangalees detained one Khandakar Abu Taleb from Mirpur-10 bus stand on March 29, 1971, and tied him up with a rope. He was brought to the Mirpur Jallad Khana Pump House and killed.

On November 25, 1971, Quader Mollah along with his 60/70 accomplices went to the village of Khanbari and Ghotan Char, now Shaheed Nagar of Keraniganj, and caught two unarmed freedom fighters from the house of Mozaffar Ahmed Khan.

Freedom fighters Osman Gani and Golam Mostafa were brutally murdered by charging bayonet in broad daylight.

A systematic attack and indiscriminate shooting by Quader Mollah and his gang killed hundreds of unarmed people of the two villages that day. Among them, 24 persons were named in the charge.

On the early morning of April 24, members of Pakistan occupation forces and around 50 non-Bangalees led by Quader Mollah raided Alubdi village of Mirpur and suddenly launched attack on unarmed villagers, killing 344 people. Of the victims, names of 24 people were mentioned in the charge.

In the evening of March 26 1971, under the leadership of Quader Mollah, some Biharis and Pakistani soldiers killed one Hazrat Ali and five members of his family at city's Mirpur.

Entering Hazrat's house at Mirpur-12 that day, accomplices of Quader Mollah shot dead Hazrat and killed the latter's wife Amina and daughters Khadija and Tahmina.

They killed his two-year-old son Babu by dashing

the baby against the ground and when his 11-year-old daughter came out from hiding, 12 army personnel raped and killed her. His first daughter Momena, however, escaped.

The tribunal also said the allegations indicate that the accused facilitated, actively participated in and substantially contributed to the last five murders.

Before the charge framing, the tribunal rejected a petition seeking discharge of the accused.

As the reading out of the charges ended, the tribunal chairman asked the accused, "Do you plead guilty or not?"

"I am totally innocent. I was not in Dhaka during the Liberation War. All charges are fabricated," replied Quader Mollah.

The Jamaat leader said he left Dhaka on March 12 or 13 in 1971 and had come to Dhaka once in July for some 15 days to take part in examination.

After the proceeding, Abdur Razzaq, chief of defence counsels, told reporters that they would file a petition for review of the indictment order.

PROSECUTION REBUKED The yesterday expressed deep dissatisfaction, as no prosecutor was present at the courtroom as the proceeding started at 10:30am.

Prosecution AKM Saiful Islam arrived at 10:40am while Mohammad Ali, the engage prosecutor of Quader Mollah's case came at the court at 10:43am.

"Mr Mohammad Ali! Why are you 10-minute late? Is it the norms?" asked Judge M Shahinur Islam, one of the members of the tribunal.

When Mohammad Ali stood to say something, Justice ATM Fazle Kabir said, "We express our deep dissatisfaction. None of you was present at the courtroom [when the proceeding started]. Is it the conduct of prosecution?"

When Mohammad Ali said, "Sorry," Shahinur Islam said, "Sorry is not enough always. If you cannot handle, just quit."

Earlier on the day, the tribunal granted two prosecution's petitions seeking permission to allow six additional witnesses in the case but rejected another prosecution's petition to make some charge in the formal charge.

Justice Obaidul Hassan, one of the tribunal members, passed the order on the petitions.

Non-stop power

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MA Momen, acting president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said the government's concept was good, but the prices were too high.

"Businesses will not remain competitive if we buy power at this price," he said, adding, "On the other hand, we have no choice but to say yes to the Berc decision as our units are now running on high-cost diesel and furnace oil for seven to eight hours a day."

Considering this, the option is good but the government should come up with a uniform price for the premium packages keeping competitiveness in mind, he said.

Amjad Khan Chowdhury, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also welcomed the uninterrupted supply of power.

"But the price of electricity should be reasonable as the production cost has already gone up due to various reasons," he said.

Asif Ibrahim, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also urged the government to lower the electricity price.

The supply would definitely increase production in industrial units, he added.

Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, vice-president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the system would make the production cost vary, as big industries would be able to purchase electricity at high prices but the small factories would find it harder to afford non-stop power supply at this price.

"No doubt we need uninterrupted power supply, but the government should revise the prices," said Jahangir Alamin, president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association.

Berc Chairman Syed Yusuf Hossain at a press briefing yesterday said the government had introduced the system to reduce subsidies and inflation.

"Once the system is launched we will not need to increase power prices frequently, as the sale value and the production cost is almost the same," he said.

On May 2, Berc held a public hearing in its office as per an application from Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB). According to the hearing, BPDB will primarily sell 500MW of electricity under the scheme throughout the month.

PM flies

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Voices, New Directions," emphasising the challenges of change.

Policy makers and officials, leaders, activists, entrepreneurs and journalists will meet during sessions to facilitate productive dialogue concerning problems faced in US relations with the Muslim world.

The Forum will discuss political changes in the Arab countries, the leading forces inspiring and shaping cultural development across the Muslim world, the power of non-state actors, and the new geopolitical challenges.

Hasina will lead a 38-member delegation, which includes Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Ambassador-at-Large Mohammad Ziauddin and high officials from the Prime Minister's Office and foreign ministry.

Sheikh Hasina will deliver a keynote speech at the gala dinner keynote speeches session scheduled for this evening (May 29) at Wosail Ball Room of the Ritz Carlton Hotel.

Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Secretary General of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, and Ambassador Martin S. Indyk, vice president and director of the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C., will also address the gala dinner session.

Sheikh Hasina will leave Doha at 9:10am (local time) tomorrow and is expected to return home at 6:00pm.