

# Iraq forces find 53 corpses south of Baghdad: officials

AFP, Hilla

Iraqi security forces found the bodies yesterday of 53 men who had been bound and executed in a confessionally mixed province south of the capital, police and medical officials said.

The men were found in orchards south of Babil provincial capital Hilla, all with gunshots to the head or chest, in killings reminiscent of the brutal sectarian bloodshed that gripped Iraq in 2006-7.

A mortuary official said the victims were killed at least a week ago. It was not immediately clear why the men were killed, the officials said.

Although attacks have taken place in Babil province during a jihadist-led offensive that overran swathes of territory north and west of Baghdad last month, the area where the bodies were found was not close to the sites of other recent violence.

North of Hilla is a deeply divided region that earned the monicker Triangle of Death for the ferocity of its sectarian violence in the years after the US-led invasion of 2003.

South of Hilla are the Shia shrines cities of Karbala and Najaf, and the heartland of the country's Shiite Arab majority that dominates the Baghdad government to the anger of the Sunni Arab former elite.

# Long wait

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five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by the chief justice on April 16 kept those waiting for verdict.

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 on February 28 last year sentenced Sayedee to death for killing Ibrahim Kutti and one Bisa Bali in Pirojpur during the Liberation War in 1971. It found him guilty of all the eight out of 20 charges filed against him.

Activists of Jamaat and pro-Jamaat student body Islami Chhatra Shibir last year went on the rampage across the country in protest against the verdict, leaving more than 60 people dead.

The Jamaat-Shibir men in Bogra even tried to coax people into joining in by propaganda that Sayedee's face had surfaced on the moon and that it was everyone's holy duty to save the Jamaat naye-e-ameer.

The SC on September 17 last year handed down the death penalty on another Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah for his wartime atrocities in 1971.

Mollah was executed on December 12 last year.

# Marine

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In a landmark judgment, the tribunal rejected India's maritime claim and upheld Bangladesh's claim of 200 nautical miles' exclusive economic zone and territorial rights in the Bay of Bengal.

"This victory has not come with anyone's defeat as it [the dispute] was not settled through any war, but rather resolved by law. Through this [verdict], Sheikh Hasina proved that peace can be established through law," Ashraf said.

The LGRD minister also thanked India for accepting the verdict, while addressing a brief rally before a victory procession organised by Dhaka City Awami League to mark the judgement at its central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

The United Nations Permanent Court of Arbitration, based in The Hague, awarded Bangladesh 19,467 sq km, out of 25,602 sq km, in the Bay of Bengal.

"Neither [BNP chairperson] Khaleda Zia nor [Jatiya Party chief] HM Ershad took any initiative over the disputed maritime boundaries when they were in power."

But Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina went to court against Myanmar and India and achieved victory, the AL spokesperson said, adding that this was the difference between Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia.

Addressing the rally, AL presidium member Abdul Latif Siddique said those who did not believe in the spirit of Bangladesh's independence had been defeated by the verdict.

"All Bangladeshis are happy over the verdict but one person is unhappy. In fact, Khaleda Zia and her party were defeated through the verdict," he added.

Party leaders Suranjit Sengupta, Matia Chowdhury, Mahbulul Alam Hanif, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and Quamrul Islam also spoke at the rally.

Responding to the BNP's demand for Talpatti island, AL presidium member Matia Chowdhury said, "The island remains in paper, not in reality." Following the rally, the city AL brought out a procession that ended at the Jatiya Press Club after parading different city streets.

Jubo League, youth front of the ruling party, organised a rally at the same venue and brought out a procession.

# Iraq situation not that serious

## Minister says no need to bring back expat workers from the Gulf country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The situation in Iraq is not so awful that the Bangladeshi workers need to be repatriated on an emergency basis, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain said yesterday.

"There might be one or two bad incidents at personal level. Nothing has happened there that should cause panic. It is not like the Libyan crisis," he told reporters after a meeting with deputy commissioners (DCs) at the secretariat.

The minister's comments came at a time when 68 Bangladeshi workers returned home from Iraq last week, while 110 more are likely to come back home by July 14 for security concerns following violent internal clashes among various forces in Iraq.

Several countries, including India, are trying to repatriate their citizens working in chaotic Iraq.

Earlier, Bangladesh embassy officials in Baghdad told The Daily Star that they were not coming out of the

embassy for security reasons in Iraq where around 25,000 Bangladeshi workers are living.

Mosharraf Hossain, however, said if need be, the government will repatriate the Bangladeshis from Iraq, and the International Organisation for Migration has already been consulted in this regard.

He said Bangladesh had talked to the Iranian authorities, and if the migrant workers are in any problem, Iran will provide them with shelter.

"Migrant workers each spend Tk 2-5 lakh to go abroad. Sometimes, they are cheated and return home. Sometimes, their properties are grabbed in their absence at home," Mosharraf said.

The minister said he had asked the DCs to be helpful to the aspirant or migrant workers to solve their problems.

He said the ministry would send updated data of the migrants to the expatriates' welfare desk of all the DC offices and asked the DCs to arrange open discussions at the union level to create awareness among the aspirant migrants.

# Quader for freeing highways from illegal occupation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday expressed frustration over illegal shops occupying the highways and unauthorised vehicles like Nasimon and Karimon using them.

Referring to the Nabinagar-Chandra Highway, which has recently been expanded into a dual carriage-way, he said the expansion brought no result as both sides of the road had been occupied.

He was speaking to reporters after his ministry's conference with the deputy commissioners (DCs) at the Secretariat.

The minister's reaction came as a number of DCs had earlier proposed to construct new roads or expand the existing ones.

Quader said neither construction nor expansion of roads would be enough. "Discipline on the roads is more important for which we need to change our attitudes," he observed.

Quader sought the cooperation of the DCs to rid the roads of congestion and hassles so that people could travel smoothly to their homes during this Eid. The minister said they were facing a different situation this year due to rain and congestion that made journeys difficult.

"Earlier, I talked about giving peace to the people heading home. However, peace has become elusive. This year we will try to reduce the plight of the people and give them comfort," he

added. The DCs told railway ministry officials to take initiatives so that occupied land belonging to the railways could be recovered. Railway Minister Mujiburul Haq assured them of taking necessary measures to that end.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury asked the DCs to encourage farmers to cultivate wheat and other high-value crops in the uplands during winter to increase yield.

She said large areas in the uplands remain barren during winter due to shortage of water for cultivating boro, resulting in less production. She suggested that the DCs ensure that every piece of cropland is cultivated.

Matia also informed the chiefs of the district administration that her ministry had plans to introduce saline and temperature tolerant wheat for the southern part of the country this year.

"We have already conducted trial production of the wheat in the south and the result is good. So, we are planning to expand wheat production in the southern region," Matia told The Daily Star after her ministry's conference with the DCs.

Agriculture Secretary SM Nazmul Islam told the DCs that structures and buildings had been constructed on a vast area of agricultural land in the country, decreasing production.

Both the minister and the secretary suggested that the DCs look into the matter, said sources attending the meeting.

# War, hunger darken South Sudan third anniversary

AFP, Juba

South Sudan's warring leaders called on each other to restart peace talks yesterday, all the while trading blame for a raging civil war that marred independence celebrations in the world's youngest nation.

"Put down your guns and come home," President Salva Kiir appealed to rebels, in a speech to mark three years of independence, before accusing his rival and former deputy Riek Machar of launching renewed attacks in the nearly seven-month-old civil war that has brought the nation to the brink of famine.

Thousands waved flags at

military parades Wednesday, despite having little to celebrate in a nation ravaged by ethnic atrocities.

Analysts say both sides believe the war is still winnable by force.

The streets of the capital were lined with banners proclaiming "One People, One Nation", amid a show of force with a military parade and speeches to celebrate the break-away from the repressive government in Khartoum.

Three ceasefire deals have failed to stick, and peace talks in luxury hotels in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa have made little progress.

# Govt wants to withdraw

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with Nur Hossain, the prime suspect in the murder case.

Following the killings, the government transferred more than 80 policemen, including some DB officers, from Narayanganj.

Later in May, the HC ordered the CID to investigate the case alongside the DB to ensure transparency of the probe.

In its third report on the progress of the investigation, the CID informed the HC yesterday that its probe had got stuck because it did not get the confessional statements of the three Rab men.

The CID report comes amid widespread allegations that a vested group has been trying to ensure that only a limited number of people have access to the confessional statements.

Reportedly, the accused Rab men in their statements admitted that their top officers at headquarters were involved in the murder.

Mukhlesur Rahman, additional deputy inspector general of CID, said there was hardly any development in the investigation over the past few days.

"We applied to the trial court for permission for getting the confessional statements, but did not receive them yet," he said. "We are still hopeful about the probe outcome."

Police insiders said the CID and the DB might be in a conflict over taking credit for solving the case, but Mukhlesur rejected the suggestion.

Another additional DIG of the CID, Shah Alam, said the two agencies were working on the basis of a mutual understanding.

Contacted, Narayanganj Police Superintendent Khandaker Mahid Uddin said there was no pressure from the government to conceal the truth.

"We are probing the matter with absolute freedom."

# No plan

FROM PAGE 1

than a [third class] municipality." The financial aspect will also be considered in determining the fate of zila parishads, he noted.

Ashraf pointed out that more branches in the local government system mean more expenditure and everybody should keep it in mind.

The AL leader hinted at strengthening the union parishad, the lowest tier of the local government system, as the grassroots people are directly linked with it.

The High Court in a ruling in 1992 had asked the then government to hold elections to zila parishads. But no government has paid heed to it so far.

During the autocratic rule of HM Ershad, lawmakers were appointed chairmen of zila parishads. With the fall of the military ruler, the chairmen, most of whom were MPs from his Jatiya Party, were removed and deputy commissioners were made ex-officio chairmen.

In 2000, the AL-led government repealed the Zila Parishad Act, 1988, and passed the current law with a provision for direct polls to zila parishads. But no elections to the parishads have been held so far.

In its election manifesto, the AL in 2008 had pledged to strengthen district councils through decentralisation of power. "The district councils will be transformed into centres for implementing programmes on education and health and all other development plans and programmes and also for maintaining law and order," it said.

In 2011, the AL-led government had appointed administrators to 61 zila parishads, excluding three hill districts, with a pledge to hold elections within the following six months. Most of the administrators were top district level leaders of the AL.

A study by Transparency International Bangladesh in April revealed that zila parishads had become political organisations of the AL as they are run by partisan administrators instead of elected representatives.

## NO TO DCS' DEMAND

Ashraf at the conference of DCs turned down a proposal for empowering them with the jurisdiction to remove public representatives at the union parishad level on charges of illegal activities.

"An elected representative should be rewarded or punished by another elected representative. All the elected representatives are in favor of the proposal," he mentioned.

"As an elected representative and the minister concerned, I myself take punishable measures for any wrongdoings," he told reporters.

In a written proposal to the Cabinet Division, some DCs sought power to remove elected union parishad chairmen and members if they were found involved in illegal and anti-people activities.

Ashraf informed the DCs that land of the LGRD ministry is being grabbed in different districts. He instructed the deputy commissioners to recover the commandeered land and take steps to prevent further grabbing of it.

Speaking at the conference, Monzur Hossain, secretary of Local Government Division, asked the DCs to properly register the births and death of citizens.

# New gadget

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Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US, is designed to be worn on the finger like a ring.

When it is held over words on a printed page or a digital screen a synthesised voice reads the sentences out loud.

The device could give people with impaired vision the ability to understand written material in any form -- from bus signs to medication notes to a restaurant menu.

It could also enable users to access the vast number of books and other materials that are not currently available in Braille.

The device, called the FingerReader, is equipped with a small camera that scans text.

Reading is as easy as pointing the finger at text. Special software tracks the finger movement, identifies words and processes the information.

The device includes vibration motors that alert readers when they stray from the script.

Prof Pattie Maes, who leads the team which developed the prototype said: "It is like reading with the tip of your finger and it's a lot more flexible, a lot more immediate than any solution that they have right now."

Developing the gadget has taken three years of software coding and experimenting with different designs.

One problem that the developers have not yet cracked is how to make it work with touch-screen smart phones and tablets.

At the moment, as the finger is run along a touch screen it moves the text, making it difficult for the FingerReader to capture the words.

That is a problem the MIT team need to solve before the device is ready for market.

# US snooped on Muslim-American leaders: report

AFP, Washington

The FBI and National Security Agency monitored the emails of prominent Muslim-American activists, academics and a political candidate, according to a report co-authored by journalist Glenn Greenwald.

The report appearing in the online news site The Intercept said the surveillance was authorized by a secret intelligence court under procedures intended to locate spies and terrorist suspects.

The report, citing documents in an NSA spreadsheet leaked by former contractor Edward Snowden, showed the emails of the individuals, but not their names.

The Intercept said it identified at least five persons, all American citizens, based on their email addresses.

They were Faisal Gill, a longtime Republican Party operative and one-time candidate for public office; Asim Ghafoor, an attorney who has represented clients in terrorism-related cases; Hooshang Amirahmadi, an Iranian-American professor at Rutgers University; Agha Saeed, a civil liberties activist and former professor at California State University; and Nihad Awad, the executive director of the Council on

American-Islamic Relations.

According to the report by Greenwald and Murtaza Hossain, the spreadsheet shows 7,485 email addresses listed as monitored between 2002 and 2008.

Many of the emails appeared to belong to foreigners suspected of being linked to Al-Qaeda, including Anwar al-Awlaki, the Yemeni-American cleric killed in a 2011 drone strike.

But the journalists' investigation also found a number of US citizens monitored in this manner, which requires an order from the secret intelligence court based on evidence linking them to espionage or terrorist activities.

US officials, responding to the report, said communications are only monitored with a "legitimate foreign intelligence or counterintelligence purpose."

"It is entirely false that US intelligence agencies conduct electronic surveillance of political, religious or activist figures solely because they disagree with public policies or criticize the government, or for exercising constitutional rights," said a joint statement from the Justice Department and office of the Director of National Intelligence.

# It's Argentina vs Germany

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Dutch captain Robin van Persie, whose place had been in doubt after a stomach problem, was substituted late in the game after an anonymous evening.

The best Dutch opening fell to Arjen Robben in the closing stages, but his shot from a tight angle after a one-two with Sneijder was superbly blocked by Javier Mascherano.

Argentina goalkeeper Sergio Romero told Argentines to "enjoy the moment" after saving two penalties in the semi-final shootout.

"Enjoy the moment, we will enjoy it and tomorrow we will start working for the final," he said in a touchline interview.

"I feel immense happiness, I'm really happy with everything. (Penalties) are a question of luck, that is the reality. I had confidence in myself and, fortunately, everything turned out well."

"Hope has been intact since day one," he added.

Substitute Sergio Aguero said: "It means so many things, a lot of people didn't think that Argentina would be in the final, but we know what a good team we have."

The Argentina victory on Sunday rubs salt into the wounds of host nation Brazil, who were still struggling to come to terms with their record 7-1 defeat to Germany on Wednesday.

Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari has taken the blame for the defeat and called it "the worst day of my life" but said Wednesday no decision on his future would be taken until after the World Cup.

"We still have work," Scolari said. "We have a commitment with the CBF (Brazilian Football Confederation) until the end of the World Cup."

Brazil face the Netherlands in the third place play-off in Brasilia on Saturday.

"It is only after this game we will talk with the direction of the CBF, that's when we will decide," added Scolari, appointed to a second stint as Brazil coach in December 2012.

Scolari also tried to put a positive spin on Brazil's performance, pointing out the Selecao had reached the semi-finals for the first time since 2002.

"It's the first time we reached a semi-final since 2002 so maybe our work wasn't so bad," Scolari said.

Scolari has faced calls to go after Tuesday's debacle in Belo Horizonte.

"Go To Hell Felipe," the daily O Dia newspaper said along with a photo splash of the manager holding up seven fingers during the game.

## NETHERLANDS

Jasper Cillessen; Dirk Kuyt, Stefan de Vrij, Ron Vlaar, Bruno Martins Indi (Daryl Janmaat 46), Daley Blind; Georginio Wijnaldum, Wesley Sneijder, Nigel de Jong (Jordy Clasie 62); Arjen Robben, Robin van Persie (capt) (Klaas-Jan Huntelaar 96)

Penalty scorers: Arjen Robben, Dirk Kuyt

Yellow card: Bruno Martins Indi (45), Klaas-Jan Huntelaar (105)

## ARGENTINA

Sergio Romero; Pablo Zabaleta, Martin Demichelis, Ezequiel Garay, Marcos Rojo; Enzo Pérez (Rodrigo Palacio 81), Lucas Biglia, Javier Mascherano, Ezequiel Lavezzi (Maxi Rodriguez 101); Lionel Messi (cap), Gonzalo Higuain (Sergio Aguero 82)

Penalty scorers: Lionel Messi, Ezequiel Garay, Sergio Aguero, Maxi Rodriguez

Yellow card: Martin Demichelis (49)

Referee: Cuneyt Kadir (TUR)

# Maritime ruling upsets

FROM PAGE 2

have also upset Indian negotiators, apart from leaving sections of the foreign policy establishment worried about opposition from state governments on the eastern coast.

"This is very honestly a ruling that is not good for India," a senior Indian official involved in the negotiations told The Telegraph. "The award of the area to Bangladesh is irrational in our view, and the arguments used to justify the decision quite frankly border on the absurd."

After multiple rounds of unsuccessful negotiations, the government of current Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina approached the UN arbitration court in 2009.

India agreed to join the tribunal's proceedings and nominated Pemmaraja Srinivasa Rao as its member to the five-judge bench hearing the case. Bangladesh's nominee on the panel was Ghana's Thomas A Mensah. German international law veteran Rudiger Wolfrum headed the bench.

India, said the newspaper report, insisted that only the area just south of Bangladesh and Bengal ought to be considered while demarcating the maritime boundary. This area amounted to 172,220sq km -- just under twice Bengal's area of 88,752 sq km.

But Bangladesh demanded that parts of the sea close to the Odisha and Andhra Pradesh border, too, must be considered as disputed territory.

According to the verdict, India won a tiny island known as New Moore or South Talpatti that some satellite

images suggest may have drowned in recent years. But New Delhi lost a bigger battle, over the geographic method the arbitration court would use to mark out the boundary.

Dhaka had suggested that the judges take a compass and pencil, and mark the maritime boundary by dividing the angle created by the abutting Indian and Bangladesh coasts equally.

In effect, this "180-degree principle" meant drawing a straight line down from the starting point of the demarcation, to a point where both nations accept that their EEZ ends.

India contended that the equal-angle principle could not be adopted because curves further down its neighbour's coast would effectively give Bangladesh greater sea territory than was fair, mentioned the report.

The maritime boundary defined by the UN court justified its order by calculating the ratio of the total areas it awarded to India and Bangladesh.

But the ratio -- India was awarded 300,220 sq km of the area, almost thrice Bangladesh's 106,613 sq km -- is misleading, according to Indian officials.

They said the maritime territory demarcated to New Delhi included a large chunk along its eastern seaboard that was never really under dispute.

For Bangladesh, the victory is the second of its kind in quick succession after it won a UN arbitration battle against Myanmar in 2012, also over the demarcation of its maritime boundary with that nation.