

# Syria regime, Kurds join to fight ISIS in Hasakeh

AFP, Hasakeh

In two districts of Syria's Hasakeh city, Kurdish fighters and regime forces rest before returning to battle the Islamic State group, a shared enemy being fought jointly for the first time.

Although the two forces are fighting in different parts of the northeastern city, where control is divided between the Kurds and the government, both are necessary to defeat the jihadists.

"We can't fight all alone in Hasakeh because IS attacked in great numbers," a government soldier said, sheltering from the scorching heat in a house surrounded by sandbags in the Ghweyran district.

The capital of Hasakeh province has been spared much of the violence of Syria's conflict, and control of the city has been shared between Kurdish and regime forces for several years now.

But IS has encroached gradually in the province, and made a series of attempts to enter the city, finally succeeding in an operation that began on June 25.

The jihadists seized several southern neighbourhoods and prompted tens of thousands of residents to flee, forcing Kurdish fighters and regime troops into an unofficial alliance to defend the city.

The joint effort has borne fruit in recent days, with fighters from the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) taking territory south of the city from IS, effectively encircling them.

Inside the city, government troops have also advanced.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor, army forces and Kurdish fighters have almost totally encircled IS in the southern part of Hasakeh.

"We've pushed the IS guys out of Ghweyran. There's only a bit left to go," a senior army officer told AFP as he inspected troops in the neighbourhood.

Despite sharing control of the city for several years, never before have the regime and Kurds in Hasakeh have come together to fight IS.

"The Kurds wouldn't have been able to encircle the IS fighters without the weapons we gave them," the officer said.

As he spoke, his parched forces passed around a bottle of water as temperatures hit around 40 degrees Celsius (101 Fahrenheit).

Nearby was the carcass of a car bomb, one of many vehicles IS had rigged with explosives or sent into the city with suicide bombers at the wheel in a bid to take territory.

# Dulal, Nur

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internet, sparking uproar in the public.

Locals caught the accused in the act of hiding Rajon's body and turned them in to police. Jalalabad police later filed a murder case in this connection.

Rahmatullah, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police (SMP), yesterday told The Daily Star that Nur Miah had videoed the incident but left the scene before Rajon died.

Nur Miah yesterday told the Court of Sylhet Metropolitan Magistrate-3 Anowarul Haq that he had videoed the incident for nearly half an hour with his mobile phone and then left for Ambarkhana area in the city.

He had later learned from others that Rajon was dead, he added.

Dulal Ahmed, on the other side, confessed to taking part in the torture of Rajon.

As many as 11 people have so far been arrested in connection with the child murder.

Of them, four have been directly charged with the murder. They are Muhith Alam, his brother Kamrul Islam, 24, who was arrested in Jeddah, their accomplice Ali Haider, 34, and security guard Moyna Miah, 45.

Officer-in-Charge of Jalalabad police Akhtar Hossain said Muhith had been put on remand. Fresh remand for him might be sought if he did not make a confessional statement before a magistrate, the OC added.

# Want to spot

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## A POWER JUNKIE

"Serial killers typically have a real affinity with power, even when they've been caught and know the game is up," explained the experts. Intent on exerting some kind of control over the people around them, they often hold back bits of crucial information in a bid to maintain power over the situation, gain attention and assert a warped sense of authority."

Ian Brady, the Moors Murderer who was convicted of killing five children with accomplice Myra Hindley between 1963 and 1965, withheld the location of victim Keith Bennett's body from police which many believe was to assert power and control.

## A MANIPULATOR

"Apparent vulnerability and the need to please have been used effectively time and time again by serial killers as a way of hiding a sinister personality," continued the experts.

"Some of the world's best known serial killers have a frightening ability to manipulate those around them, pressing the right buttons in order to present themselves in a false light."

"Serial killers are also often able to manipulate a situation in order to pass the blame for their actions, using hot-button issues of the day or medical psychological research to try to explain their actions."

Doctor Harold Shipman, for example, used his position as a medical expert to manipulate his patients into treatments that ultimately killed them while posing as a caring member of society.

## AN EGOTISTICAL BRAGGER

Elsewhere, Real Crime and Dr Yardley said: "Egotistical serial killers often can't help but brag about the atrocities they've committed, whether it's aimed at their accomplices, the next victim, law enforcement, or just themselves."

"Take Brady and Hindley for example. They revisited the burial sites on Saddleworth Moor often, taking ghoulish trophy shots of the desolate landscape as a memento of their horrendous crimes."

"Of course, these helped incriminate the pair and lead the police to the three bodies eventually found on the Moor."

Convicted British serial killer Trevor Hardy, dubbed Beast of Manchester for his murders of teenage girls in the 1970s, bragged about one murder to his younger brother which led to his arrest.

## A SUPERFICIAL CHARMER

"Serial killers tend to have a very good grasp of other people's emotions and are quick to pick up on any vulnerability or weakness in order to convince them into doing things they normally wouldn't," added Dr Yardley.

Unfinished business: Shortly before his execution in 1989, serial killer Bundy (pictured) confessed to 30 murders in seven states between 1974 and 1978, although it is believed he may have killed many more

## AN AVERAGE JOE

Meanwhile, Real Crime continued: "Possibly the scariest trait of all, many serial killers look like a pillar of the community on first sight."

Previous studies have found a link between serial killers and childhood abuse, including physical, mental and sexual.

The killers typically come from unstable families, shown signs of voyeurism and sadomasochism from an early age and more than 90 per cent of serial killers are male.

Interviews with friends of Charles Manson, who killed seven people over the course of two nights in August 1969, said he would encourage violence against other children even at school.

He was also reportedly abused and neglected as child.

# World mayors urge action on climate change in Vatican

REUTERS, Vatican City

Mayors and governors from major world cities were to urge global leaders yesterday to take bold action at this year's UN climate change summit, saying it may be the last chance to tackle human-induced global warming.

Pope Francis has invited some 65 local and regional leaders to attend a two-day conference on how cities can address what the Vatican calls the "interconnected emergencies" of climate change and human trafficking.

It is the Vatican's latest attempt to influence a United Nations summit in Paris in December aiming for a global deal to combat climate change after past failures.

The pope issued an encyclical in April demanding swift action to save the planet from environmental ruin and urging world leaders to hear "the cry of

the earth and the cry of the poor".

Mayors from South America, Africa, the United States, Europe and Asia will later on Tuesday sign a declaration stating that the Paris summit "may be the last effective opportunity to negotiate arrangements that keep human-induced warming below 2 degrees centigrade."

Leaders should come to a "bold agreement that confines global warming to a limit safe for humanity while protecting the poor and the vulnerable..." says the declaration, a copy of which was seen by Reuters.

High-income countries should help finance the cost of climate change mitigation in low-income countries, it says.

In a direct rejection of so-called climate change deniers, the declaration says: "Human-induced climate change is a scientific reality, and its effective control is a moral imperative for humanity."

# Rony charged

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Rony would get favour from the police for being the son of a ruling party lawmaker.

Police, however, refuted allegations of any favouritism all along, and submitted the charge sheet yesterday, around three months after the incident.

"We thought that he [Rony] might not face trial, as he is son of a lawmaker. But the media stood by us and now I am hopeful that we will get justice," said Salma Akhter, wife of deceased auto-rickshaw driver Yakub Ali.

"I will not get my husband back, but I want justice," Salma told The Daily Star over the phone in an emotion-choked voice.

According to the charge sheet, Rony along with his friends Kamal Mahmud, Jahangir Alam Bhuiyan and Mohammad Kamal drank alcohol and beer worth Tk 95,000 at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital till the small hours of April 15.

They left the hotel around 1:30am and went to Moghbazar by Rony's sport utility vehicle to drop Jahangir. As they were returning, the vehicle got stuck in traffic jam in front of the LMG Tower on New Eskaton Road for four to five minutes, read the charge sheet.

Rony, who was smoking at that time, lowered the window of the vehicle and fired four to five shots at random, hitting rickshaw-puller Abdul Hakim and auto-rickshaw driver Yakub Ali. The two later died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The vehicle sped away immediately after the incident. Rony went to his Dhanmondi home after dropping Kamal Mahmud at Eskaton Plaza and Mohammad Kamal at Hatirpool.

Hakim's mother Monowara Begum filed a murder case with Ramna Police Station on April 15 against some unidentified persons.

Ramna police then started a probe and collected footage of the close

circuit camera installed at the nearby Janakantha Office. In the footage, they found suspicious movement of a black sport utility vehicle in the area in the small hours of April 15.

Later, police identified the vehicle owner with the help of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority.

The murder case was transferred to the DB police on May 25, and the detectives arrested Rony and Imran on May 31.

Later, Rony's three friends, who were with him in the vehicle, gave judicial statements as witnesses, while Rony's driver Imran gave a confessional statement to magistrates. They said Rony had fired four to five shots that hit the victims.

Ballistics tests confirmed that the bullet found in the body of auto-rickshaw driver Yakub was fired from Rony's licensed gun. On July 6, the DB police requested the Dhaka Deputy Commissioner to cancel Rony's arms licence.

Rony has been remanded thrice in the case for 10 days. He didn't give any confessional statement.

"Though he [Rony] didn't give a confessional statement, we have found circumstantial evidence and three eyewitnesses which are enough to prove the charges," Dipak told reporters after submitting the charge sheet.

A total of 37 people, including Imran, were made prosecution witnesses in the charge sheet, he added.

# Single war

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The Awami League-led government formed the first tribunal on March 25, 2010 in line with the party's electoral pledge to try people who committed crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

The government formed a second tribunal on March 22, 2012 to expedite the trial.

# Witch-hunt, even today!

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village of Bhimajuli told NDTV that a woman named Anima Ronghanti, 35, "who claims to be a goddess," gathered people at a temple and told them the Adivasi woman, identified variously as Puni, Purni or Moni Orang was a witch who would bring bad luck to the village and had been responsible for people falling ill.

About 200 people then descended on her home and attacked her in front of her family.

"The attackers armed with machetes and other crude implements descended on the village and took away Moni Orang from her house and then brutally killed her," senior police official Manabendra Dev Roy told AFP. "She was decapitated and her limbs were chopped off."

A villager on local television reportedly said that "Moni was a witch and had cast evil spells on her enemies. ... There is no place for such sorcerers and so her killing is justified."

It was unclear from news reports whether anyone has been arrested and charged with the murder but the Hindustan Times reported that seven villagers have been arrested.

The scourge of witch hunts has been well documented in studies and investigations in India and is even said to be on the increase.

"It generally happens in places where there is almost no economic development, with little or no access to basic education and health care," scholar Rakesh K. Singh wrote in a 2011 study.

"In this kind of an atmosphere, people tend to develop very strong superstitious beliefs and anything bad that might befall these villagers like bad crop, diseases, sudden and unexplained death of someone in the family, or drying of well tend to be considered the work of some evil 'witch'."

Thus begins a witch hunt to locate the person responsible."

The killings often involve tribal rivalries. In December, more than 70 Adivasis were killed in Assam allegedly by a group called the National Democratic Front of Bodoland. Five Bodo militants were killed in retaliation. The Bodo are another ethnic group in northeast India that is seeking a separate territory.

Victims are often lower caste and almost always poor. Sometimes their own relatives conspire against them. In October, a woman named Dukalheen Bai died after she was stripped, beaten and tortured for hours by her brother-in-law and other family members, the BBC reported. The brother-in-law accused her of making his son ill through witchcraft. That occurred in the state of Chhattisgarh in central India.

"My mother was beaten up very badly," Bai's son Dukalheen told the BBC. "She kept screaming but the entire village just watched."

# It's all for dowry

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Sukhi's father Noor said he was not willing to send back his daughter. But in a village arbitration, Rabiul's family apologised and took Sukhi back, promising no recurrence of such torture.

But the day before the Eid, Rabiul gauged out Sukhi's eye with an electrical tester while his brothers Idris Ali and Akter Hosen and sister Dholi Begum had her pinned down.

Sukhi's brother Mohsin filed a case, said Shahed Ali, sub-inspector of Savar Police Station. "The accused are on the run and we are after them."

According to Ain O Salish Kendra, 161 cases of domestic violence were reported in the first six months of this year, up from 148 in the same period last year 2014.

# Key Mumbai

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decades after the deadliest attacks ever to hit India--after the Supreme Court rejected his final plea.

The Bombay Stock Exchange, the offices of Air

India and a luxury hotel were among the targets of the March 1993 blasts, which killed 257 people in India's commercial capital.

The attacks were believed to have been staged by Mumbai's Muslim-dominated underworld in retaliation for anti-Muslim violence that had killed more than 1,000 people.

Memon was the only one of 1 people convicted for the 1993 attacks to have his death sentence upheld on appeal. The sentences on the others were commuted to life imprisonment.

Executions are only carried out for "the rarest of rare" cases in India.

But President Pranab Mukherjee has rejected a number of mercy pleas in recent years, ending an unofficial eight-year moratorium.

A Kashmiri separatist convicted of involvement in a deadly 2001 attack on the Indian parliament was executed in New Delhi in 2013, while the lone surviving gunman from the deadly 2008 Mumbai attacks was hanged in 2012.

"Crimes such as these deserve maximum punishment," Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director for Human Rights Watch, told AFP.

"But we believe that the maximum punishment should not be the death penalty because it is inherently inhumane," she said.

## MASTERMIND ON THE RUN

Amnesty India said it was disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision in the case.

"The judgement regrettably puts India in opposition to the global trend towards moving away from the death penalty," the rights group said.

"There exists no reliable evidence that the threat of execution is more of a deterrent to crime than a prison sentence," it said on Twitter.

Memon, an accountant by profession, denied any involvement in the blasts during a staggered trial and appeal process.

He and two of his brothers, Essa and Yusuf Memon, were convicted in 2006 under Indian anti-terrorism laws of conspiracy and abetting the attacks.

Another brother Tiger Memon was alleged to have masterminded the attacks along with Mumbai gang boss Dawood Ibrahim. Both have been on the run since 1993.

The Memons left for Dubai in the days before the bombs exploded but were arrested when they returned to India in 1994.

Eight members of the family were charged over the attacks but Memon's father died during the long-running legal proceedings, and three others were acquitted. They had all denied any role in the attacks.

The bombings also embroiled Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt, who is serving a prison sentence for buying weapons from gangsters accused of orchestrating the bombings.

Memon was convicted by a specially designated court under the draconian Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, which was promulgated immediately after the 1993 bomb blasts.

However the Act lapsed two years later and was never revived, with activists accusing the government of using it to harass Muslims.

# Man kills

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who somehow managed to escape, said the OC.

The man then stabbed Tanjila and Jamal indiscriminately, leaving them dead on the spot.

Hearing the hue and cry, neighbours rushed to the house but Kashem scared them away with the sharp weapon.

Later, he hacked to death his three goats there in a similar manner, said OC Probash, quoting witnesses.

Kashem did not stop there. He then went straight to his wife and bit her repeatedly. She bled.

Afterwards, locals came in numbers. They caught Kashem and handed him over to police.

In the afternoon when police were trying to take him to a local court, he also ferociously bit eight policemen inside the police station, said OC Probash.

The injured police personnel were taken to the Upazila Health Complex.

After the killing, police recovered the two bodies and sent them to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

Sub-Inspector Alamgir Hossain filed a case against Kashem with Chakaria Police Station in connection with his illegal intrusion into Bangladesh. Saira also filed a murder case against her husband for killing the two kids.

Saira told police that Kashem was a fraud and used to beg money from locals, claiming his children were hungry.

She said using such tricks, he collected a good amount of money before Eid, but did not buy their children anything, said police.



Yakub

# Concern over major

FROM PAGE 1

Commission (JRC), said interconnecting Teesta-Ganga-Manas-Sankosh is one of the 14 components of India's project to link 30 Himalayan rivers.

"They are not supposed to divert water from any of the Himalayn river without the consent of Bangladesh. They cannot do it without taking Bangladesh on board," Mir Sazzad said.

Quoting Indian Water Resources Minister Sanwar Lal Jat, several Indian newspapers published reports, saying the water resources ministry would soon be taking up the planning of a very important link, Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga, in consultation with the governments of Assam, West Bengal and Bihar.

"This link project will not only provide large irrigation and water supply benefits to Assam, West Bengal and Bihar but will also make available large quantum of water for transfer subsequently to southern states," he said in an official statement.

The governments in West Bengal, Assam and Bihar will soon be approached for their consent, Jat said.

When this correspondent drew his attention to the minister's statement, Prof Nishat said the Manas and Sankosh rivers are tributaries of India's Brahmaputra river which is called the Jamuna in Bangladesh. These rivers feed the Brahmaputra and if they divert their water, it will decrease the water flow in the Jamuna. It will decrease our share of water and also have an impact on the environment.

"As per the joint communiqué signed by the two prime ministers of Bangladesh and India in 2010, the trans-boundary rivers would be managed basin-wide and that India cannot do it alone," he said.

Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said India had already made some progress in connecting the Teesta with the Ganges through the Mahananda river.

"Many environmentalists in India do not support this controversial project. If the Indian government really tries to implement the plan, Bangladeshi environmentalists will launch a movement against this controversial project," Matin said.

# Extortion again?

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After yesterday's meeting, Ashraf said the party wanted to observe the day with a united force of the nation this year.

The programme would begin with placing of wreaths on Bangabandhu's grave at Tungipara on August 1 and end through a mourning procession on September 9.

Ashraf directed the party's front organisations to propose their programmes, which will be finalised in consultation with the party chief.

At the meeting, Ashim Kumar Ukil, AL deputy publicity affairs secretary, placed a proposal to stop party activists' extortion and to control setting up of so many archways by party men for self promotion, sources said.

The party will have to face criticism for such activities, Ashim added.

But Maya rejected his proposal and said the way the AL had been observing the programme should continue. He also claimed party men erect archways without any ill intention and this practice should not be stopped, according to the sources.

Mahabub-Ul-Alam Hanif, AL joint general secretary, supported Ashim and said no extortion would be tolerated in the name of observing the national mourning day and that the party high-ups didn't want to hear any complaint against any party man.

He added they had received several allegations of extortion by party men last year, meeting sources told this correspondent.

The Daily Star tried to reach Maya over the phone last night but his phone was found switched off.

Contacted, Hanif said they had already directed all the leaders of associate bodies to monitor their activists so that no allegation rose against them.

"We will go for tough actions if we get any specific allegation against anyone," he added.

Before the National Mourning Day last year, Maya sent letters to different business organisations and institutions, seeking sponsorship for decorating 27 road dividers of the city on the occasion of August 15.

The same year, the Chhatra League central unit didn't give permission to its Jagannath University unit to observe the occasion, fearing it would lead the unit to extort money. The BCL had also summoned several units, following allegations of extortion and asked them to refrain from such activities.

Though August 15 is a mourning day, for some AL men the day has become an occasion for celebration and an opportunity to make money out of it.

AL sources said there were some "parasitic organisations" that used the party's name to indulge in extortions and that it was difficult for the party to contain them.

MA Aziz, acting president of Dhaka city AL, admitted that the meeting discussed the alleged extortion of party men ahead of the national mourning day.

The party will strictly monitor workers and leaders so that it does not happen, he added.

"We have to observe the day solemnly because this is an emotional day for us. We don't want to observe any programme that causes sufferings to anyone," he added.

Asked about party fund for observing the day in ward level, Aziz said they donated some money for the programmes. "But the amount is too small."

# Death trap

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In a separate accident on Sunday, 17 people were killed and around 40 injured as two buses collided head-on in Mulibari.

At least 30 people died and 70 others injured in four separate road accidents in Mulibari crossing and Baniagati in the last six days.

"Accidents occur repeatedly on the two-lane road at Mulibari as it is the busiest point of Bangabandhu Bridge link road," said Miraz Uddin Ahmed, SP of Sirajganj.

"As there is no road divider at this point, drivers tend to drive at high speeds which results in accidents," he added.

Meanwhile, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader visited accident-prone stretches on the west side of the bridge yesterday morning.

Talking to journalists, the minister said, "Four road dividers will be introduced at Mulibari, Shimanto Bazar, Nalka and Baniagati points within two months."

Reckless driving and dangerous overtaking manoeuvre by drivers are causing road accidents, he said.