

Nine Kalyanpur

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College (DMC) in the morning and buried them in the afternoon.

The bodies were buried by the organisation as no one from the militants' families contacted law enforcers to receive them, Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

All but one of the bodies were identified after matching their DNA profiles with those of their family members.

The eight militants are Abdullah from Dinajpur, Abu Hakim Nayeem from Patuakhali, Taj-ul-Haque Rashid from the capital's Dhanmondi, Akifuzzaman Khan from Gulshan, Shazad Rouf Orko from Bashundhara, Motiar Rahman from Sathkhira, Jubayer Hossain from Noakhali and Raihan Kabir Tarek from Rangpur.

On July 26, police raided the Jahaj Building in the city's Kalyanpur and shot dead the nine militants. They also arrested a militant while another managed to flee.

Earlier, the bodies of five Gulshan café attackers and a chef were buried at the same graveyard on September 22. The bodies had been kept in the mortuary of Combined Military Hospital.

The six were killed during a commando operation at the café on July 2, a day after a hostage-taking at the eatery that left 22 people, including 17 foreigners, killed.

Representatives from the DMP's Counter Terrorism Unit and the voluntary organisation reached the DMC mortuary around 10:30am yesterday. After completion of all the necessary formalities in one and a half hours, the bodies were taken to the graveyard.

Hafez Maulana Shoaib Hossain, in-charge of the graveyard, said the burials were completed around 1:45pm after holding a namaz-e-janaza there.

Sohel Mahmud, head of the forensic medicine department at the DMC, said they collected samples from the nine bodies for conducting any further tests in future, if needed.

The burials brought respite to the DMC authorities as the nine bodies occupied a major part of the mortuary for around two months, hampering its normal operations.

This newspaper contacted four of the nine militants' families. Three of them had said they would not receive the bodies as their relatives were involved in militancy. However, the other family said it had applied to police to hand over the body, but to no avail.

Abdul Kaiyum, father of Jubayer, told our Noakhali correspondent that his family did not apply for the body as Jubayer was involved in anti-Islamic and terrorist activities.

Talking to our Dinajpur correspondent, Abdullah's father Sohrab Ali said he decided not to apply for his son's body as he was a militant.

Raihan's father Shahjahan Kabir also made the same decision.

Anusha Rouf, sister of Shazad, told this correspondent yesterday that they wrote to the authorities concerned over two weeks ago for handing Shazad's body over to them.

"As Shazad was a US citizen, we with the help of the US embassy in Dhaka tried to get the body. But the authorities did not give the body to us," she added.

The bodies of five more militants, including "Neo JMB" coordinator Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury, were still in the DMC morgue. The five were killed in Narayananj and in the capital's Rupnagar and Azimpur areas during operations by law enforcers.

A top DMP official said they were yet to decide on handing over the bodies to the respective families.

US says no mustard gas found in Iraq rocket attack

AFP, Washington

The US military has concluded that a rocket fired earlier this month at an Iraqi air base housing hundreds of US troops contained no mustard gas, as initially suspected.

Test results released Tuesday "determined there were no chemical warfare agents present in the munitions fired toward the Qayyarah-West Airfield, Iraq, Sept 20, 2016," according to the US military command in Baghdad.

No one was injured in the rocket attack and no one showed any immediate signs of exposure to the suspected mustard agent.

But a field test of residue from fragments recovered from an impact site had indicated the possible presence of mustard gas.

That prompted further tests by two separate laboratories, which confirmed that "no chemical warfare agent were present in the munitions," the statements said.

The Pentagon has expressed concern that Islamic State militants could use mustard gas to defend their stronghold at Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, against an Iraqi offensive.

Pakistan faces regional

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But Kathmandu Post, a leading English daily of Nepal, yesterday reported that the summit had been called off after India announced its inability to take part in it.

Radio Pakistan reported yesterday that Sartaj Aziz, adviser to the Pakistan prime minister on foreign affairs, said the summit could be postponed given the latest development, but the Saarc secretariat did not officially inform Islamabad yet.

Tensions between India and Pakistan mounted in recent weeks, after militants suspected to have entered from Pakistan stormed an Indian army base in Uri on September 18, killing 18 soldiers.

In efforts to isolate Pakistan in the region, India pulled out of the summit citing "growing interference in the internal affairs of member states by one country creating an environment that is not conducive to the successful holding of the summit."

About Bangladesh's decision, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam said, "It [the decision to boycott] has no relation with other countries' decisions. It's our own decision."

"The continuous interference of a member state in Bangladesh's internal affairs prompted us to pull out from the summit," state-run news agency BSS quoted him as telling reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday.

Without naming any country, he said a particular country's repeated attempts to interfere in Bangladesh's internal affairs have created an environment not conducive to the successful holding of the summit.

"When time and scope will be available, Bangladesh will attend such events," he added.

Afghanistan said due to increased level of violence and fighting as a result of imposed terrorism on Afghanistan, the country's president will not be able to attend the event.

Bhutan expressed its inability to participate, citing deterioration of regional peace and security due to terrorism.

Sri Lanka meanwhile said the summit would not be possible without India's participation.

Sheel Kant Sharma, who was Saarc secretary general from 2008 to 2011, has termed India's decision "extraordinary and unprecedented".

"This is the first time that India has said that it will not attend a summit," Sharma told the Wire, a Nepalese media outlet.

In the past, India adopted "stalling" tactics -- which then led to the deferment of the summit, but there were no statement which baldly castigated the would-be host or explicitly stated a reason, he added.

In the wake of the Kargil war and General Musharraf's military coup in Pakistan, India prevaricated over Atal Bihari Vajpayee attending the summit in November 1999 in Kathmandu, which eventually led to its cancellation.

Sharma pointed out that when Pakistan was supposed to host the Saarc summit in January 2004, India had similarly conveyed its reluctance to be a participant.

"Vajpayee was not keen to attend, but there were a lot of requests through the back channel from President Musharraf. The PM went only after there was a clear undertaking from Pakistan that Musharraf will make a statement about Pakistani soil not being used to support terrorism," he said.

In February 2005, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh pulled out of the summit in Dhaka over security concerns and King Gyanendra's Royal coup in Nepal. The meeting was,

Moon was once part

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within its first few hundred million years of forming.

According to the hypothesis, the collision would have caused a huge amount of debris to be ejected from the core, with Theia fusing and becoming part of the Earth and the moon forming from the debris.

While the impact is the leading hypothesis, hard evidence has been lacking.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University used seismic data of the planetary core and rocky mantle, revealing a layer of iron, silicon, oxygen and other elements hundreds of kilometres thick.

Simulations in the lab revealed that following a collision event, mixing between the object and Earth's planetary core would have left a footprint in the form of a stratified layer, like that seen close to the core today.

"We're saying this stratified layer might be the smoking gun," said Professor Peter Olson, an earth and planetary sciences researcher at Johns Hopkins.

"Its properties are consistent with it being a vestige of that impact," he added.

"Our experiments bring additional evidence in favour of the giant impact hypothesis," said Dr Maylis Landeau, lead author of the paper, now based at

however, held later in November.

Commenting on the latest development, a Bangladesh foreign ministry official who has long been involved with Saarc, said now it would be very difficult for the current Saarc chair to revive the summit as the four countries seem determined not to go Pakistan, which clearly shows the regional body would be dysfunctional for an indefinite period.

The official said if there were no initiatives by Pakistan to address the concerns of the four members, the Saarc will see a long-term stagnation.

Asked how the situation can be improved to bring the summit back on track, former Bangladesh ambassador to Pakistan FA Shamim Ahmad said Nepal as current chair of Saarc must take initiatives to resolve the issue.

"It will take time for normalcy to return, as the deadlock has been created with serious deterioration of India-Pakistan relations."

Security and foreign affairs expert Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdur Rashid said Pakistan had to come clean about its current role and stop cross-border terror activities, like that in Uri.

"Pakistan must prove that it is not patronising terrorism and militancy, and stop allowing using its territory to attack other countries. And Pakistan's change must be visible," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Saarc came into being in December 1985, with the adoption of its charter in Dhaka. The objectives were to promote the welfare and improve the quality of life of the people of South Asia by accelerating economic growth in the region and building up mutual trust among member states.

The Saarc charter requires holding its summit every year. In the three decades, however, only 18 summits were held.

One fundamental weakness of the body is lack of trust among some members. As a result, many major decisions remain unimplemented.

HC questions

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should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Ashish Ranjan Das delivered the rule following a writ petition filed by another JSD faction led by Sharif Nurul Ambia and Nazmul Haque Prodhan.

Sharif and Nazmul recently filed the writ petition with the HC, challenging legality of the EC's decision in allocating the moshal symbol to Inu's JSD faction.

Earlier on April 28, the EC allocated the electoral symbol moshal to the faction of JSD led by Inu.

The writ petitioners' lawyer Zahirul Alam Babar told The Daily Star that following the EC's decision, his clients submitted an application to the EC, seeking a review of the decision it had taken on April 28.

On August 10, the EC disposed of the application, but upheld its April 28 decision without hearing their arguments, Babar said, adding that the EC's decision was not in accordance with the law.

The lawyer said the EC on April 28 arbitrarily allocated the moshal symbol to the faction of JSD, a key component of the AL-led 14-party alliance, led by Hasanul Haq Inu and Shirin Akhter, although Inu had contested last two national elections with boat symbol.

On the contrary, the JCD led by Ambia and Prodhan had contested the election with torch symbol, he said.

Advocate Dr Shahdeen Malik argued for the writ petitioners.

BNP leader's son sued for 'threatening PM'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A case was filed against Irad Ahmed Siddiqui, son of BNP leader Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiqui, for allegedly threatening Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina via Facebook.

Abdur Rashid, senior vice-president of Kaliakair upazila unit of Awami League, lodged the case against Irad under Section 57 of the Information Communication and Technology Act with Kaliakair Police Station last night.

In the case statement, Rashid alleged that Irad posted a status on his Facebook page after 10:00pm on September 25, making threats to Sheikh Hasina.

Abdul Motaleb Miah, officer-in-charge of Kaliakair Police Station, said police found the allegation true, and they were trying to arrest the accused.

27 missing in China landslide

AFP, Beijing

A landslide which hit a village in eastern China yesterday buried dozens of houses and left 27 people missing, state media reported.

The landslide struck the village of Sucun in Suichang county of Zhejiang province at around 5pm (0900 GMT), the official Xinhua news agency said.

Afghans trump

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bounced back with their second ODI success against the Tigers to make Saturday's third and final ODI a decider and denied the home team their 100th ODI win.

Mushfiqur's blunder was a big moment in the game as Afghanistan had lost seven wickets by that time in their chase of 208 and Najibullah Zadran seemed to be the last hurdle for the home side. Off the fifth ball of the 47th over, Mosaddek bowled a flighted delivery and Najibullah stepped out for a leg-side slog but he was nowhere near the pitch of the ball. However, Mushfiqur missed the chance as the ball bobbed out of his gloves.

Najibullah eventually fell prey to Taskin Ahmed after having scored 22 valuable runs, but by then the match was tied, with three balls still remaining. Dawlat Zadran played the next ball over backward point for a boundary to seal the thrilling win for his country.

Earlier, a double-strike from Shakib Al Hasan in the fourth over derailed the Afghans' chase but Asghar Stanikzai and Mohammad Nabi got them back on track with a 107-run fifth-wicket stand before both set batsman exited in successive overs.

When Taskin -- the hero of the first match -- started the last over, the home team needed a miracle as Afghanistan required only two runs from six balls with three wickets in hand, but the stocky paceman brought some excitement with two dot deliveries before a hot-headed bouncer, which was given as a wide, gave the opponents one run. That bouncer also reflected the off-kilter mindset of most of his teammates.

Bangladesh had promised a much better show in the second match but in reality their performance was more frustrating than that in the first match, where they snatched a win from the jaws of defeat. Bangladesh made one change to the winning combination of the first match, bringing Mosaddek in place of Imrul Kayes. And the young man provided ample evidence of why he has been considered one of the most promising third-generation prospects.

The 20-year-old, combined with the excellent Shakib Al Hasan -- who took four wickets for 47 runs and became the first to take 100 ODI wickets in Mirpur -- gave some hope but in the end the lack of runs on the board after being sent into bat first proved decisive.

One must give credit to the Afghanistan bowling, but Bangladesh's established batsmen seemed to have had no clue against spin. The Tigers were comfortably placed at 111 for two in the 25th over, with Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah Riyad set at the crease, but they lost their last seven wickets for 86 runs and slipped to 165 for 9 in the 43rd over before Mosaddek launched the late blows.

The right-hander's unbeaten run-ball 45 included a scoop over long-leg and a pull over midwicket and he found support from last batsman Rubel Hossain in a 10th-wicket partnership of 43 runs to take the score to 208.

Mosaddek also took two important wickets for 30 runs but in the end he did not have the luck to make it a memorable debut.

Safety concern

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safety. Besides, a number of witnesses are unhappy about the trial as some of the culprits were not made accused in the cases.

"Police filed the cases and prepared the lists of accused and witnesses all by themselves... We have all along been kept in the dark."

His view was echoed by Neetish Barua, president of Ramu Bouddha Juba Kalyan Samity.

Both said the Buddhist community in Ramu would fully cooperate with the authorities only if a fresh case is filed based on the report of the judicial enquiry carried out after the incident.

Momtaz Ahmed, chief public prosecutor in Cox's Bazar, said he contacted the witnesses several times and tried to convince them to give deposition, but they were reluctant to appear before court.

The witnesses are not even responding to court notices, he mentioned.

Expressing disappointment, he said the cases may be dismissed if the witnesses are not produced before court.

Contacted, Shyamal Kumar Nath, superintendent of police in the district, said there was no reason for the witnesses to feel insecure as they would be provided with adequate security.

According to police sources, during primary investigation, police recorded statements of 502 witnesses under Section 161 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Twenty three accused gave statements under Section 164 in the court, confessing their involvement in the incidents.

A group of zealots unleashed violence on the Buddhist community in Ramu on September 29, 2012 by spreading a rumour that a Facebook post derogatory to the Holy Quran was made on the Facebook page of a Buddhist youth, Uttam Barua.

The bigots set fire to Buddhist temples and houses, and vandalised and looted more than 50 houses in Ramu.

They also attacked Mushurikhola crematorium at Khurushkul village in Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila and tried to attack the houses of the Hindus in Kharulia village.

The following day, the zealots attacked and ransacked five Buddhist temples in the bordering Ukhiya upazila and damaged two Hindu temples in Palongkhali union of the upazila. They also set alight and ransacked Buddhist houses in Hoaikong union of Teknaf upazila.

Law enforcers later arrested 483 people in connection with the incidents, but almost all of them got released from prison on bail.

Between September 1, 2013 and January 25, 2014, police submitted charge sheets in 18 cases to lower courts. A total of 783 people were made accused in the charge sheets.

The accused include Naikkhangchhari upazila chairman and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Tofael Ahmed, nayeb-e-ameer of Cox's Bazar district Jamaat and the then Ukhiya upazila chairman Shahjalal Chowdhury, and Ukhiya upazila BNP general secretary and sacked Ukhiya upazila chairman Sarwar Jahan

Last of Israel's founding

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Palestinians view him very differently, citing his involvement in successive Arab-Israeli wars and the occupation of Palestinian territory.

He was also prime minister in 1990 when more than 100 civilians were killed while sheltering at a UN peacekeepers' base in the Lebanese village of Qana fired upon by Israel.

Born in Poland in 1923, Peres emigrated to what was then British-mandated Palestine when he was 11.

He joined the Zionist struggle and met David Ben-Gurion, who would become his mentor and Israel's first prime minister.

Peres became director general of the nascent defence ministry at just 29.

Beyond his accomplishments in the public eye, he was also seen as a driving force in the development of Israel's undeclared nuclear programme in the 1950s.

The country is now considered the Middle East's sole nuclear-armed nation, but Israel has never publicly acknowledged it.

Netanyahu made reference to Peres's work on the nuclear programme on Wednesday.

"As a champion of Israel's defence, he strengthened its capacities in many ways, some of them still unacknowledged to this day," he said.

Despite his reputation as a statesman, he never managed to outright win a national election. Many in Israel opposed to the Oslo accords also blamed him for what they saw as their failure.

But in later life, especially during his time as president, he came to be widely embraced in Israel, while world leaders and celebrities sought him out, marvelling at his energy and intelligence.

He once confided that the secret to his longevity was daily exercise, eating little and drinking one or two glasses of good wine.

Chowdhury.

Ukhiya upazila BNP organising secretary and sacked upazila vice chairman Sultan Mahmud Chowdhury, district Jamaat organising secretary and Hoaikong union parishad chairman Nur Hossain Anwari are also on the list.

WRIT PETITIONS PENDING WITH HC

Two writ petitions on the Ramu incidents are now pending with the High Court.

Though three probe reports were submitted to the HC by a judicial body, police and the home ministry, there has not been any progress in the proceedings apparently for lack of interest of the lawyers concerned in moving the writ petitions.

The probes were carried out upon HC orders after Supreme Court lawyers Jyotirmoy Barua and Eunos Ali Akond filed the writ petitions in October 2012, seeking action against the perpetrators of the attacks and the officials who were negligent in preventing the attacks.

In 2013, the reports were submitted to the HC bench led by Justice Mirza Hussain Haider. The bench was reconstituted the same year and Justice Haider was elevated as a judge of the Appellate Division of the SC in February this year.

Talking to the newspaper, Jyotirmoy Barua said, "I am not making any move to get a date from the court for hearing as the relevant High Court benches are burdened with other cases."

"If I pray to a bench once the High Court reopens after the annual vacation, it will take at least two years for the bench to start hearing my petition. It is because all the benches having the jurisdiction over such writ petitions are burdened with other cases," said the lawyer.

The court went on annual vacation on September 9 and will reopen on October 30.

The other writ petitioner, Eunos, said the HC bench headed by Justice Haider didn't hold hearing on his petition, as it could not make it to cause list for hearing.

Without elaborating, he said he wouldn't pray to any bench for hearing the petition.

One of the probe reports submitted to the HC on May 16, 2013 blamed the local administration and intelligence and law enforcement agencies for failing to prevent the attacks.

The enquiry, conducted by a judicial body, identified 298 people responsible for the attacks. It made 20 recommendations that include enhancing competence and standards of the administration and containing posts on social media, said HC sources.

The probe conducted by police blamed the then Cox's Bazar superintendent of police and the officer-in-charge of Ramu Police Station for the failure. The committee recommended action against the then OC AK Nazibul Islam, but didn't suggest any action against the then SP Selim Md Jahangir.

The enquiry report of the home ministry mentioned that 205 people were involved in the attacks, planned at least 10 days before.