



Iraqi forces, supported by members of the Hashid al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation units), advance through the Salaheddin province in the western desert bordering Syria after leaving the town of Baiji yesterday, as they attempt to flush out remaining Islamic State (IS) group fighters in the Al-Jazeera region.

PHOTO: AFP

Bari Siddiqui

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kidneys. According to family sources, he had been undergoing dialysis treatment since last year.

The singer of popular songs like "Shua Chan Pakhi" and "Amar Gaye Joto Dukkho Shoy" left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter, and a host of relatives, friends, well-wishers and followers to mourn his death.

Siddiqui, born to a musical family in Netrokona on November 15, 1954, trained in music from a young age under Ustad Gopal Dutt, Ustad Aminur Rahman, Babir Khan and Pannalal Ghosh during the formative years of his life.

He also began playing the bansuri (bamboo flute) and trained under noted classical flautist VG Karnad in India.

Siddiqui came to mainstream attention in 2000 with the release of Humayun Ahmed's film "Shrabon Megher Din". However, his music career began much earlier, back in the 70s.

He continued to sing in films and tele-films as well after that, along with performing at concerts and on TV. He further released several music albums.

He has worked extensively with lyricist Shahidullah Farayez and has performed and conducted workshops in France, Switzerland, Malaysia, Pakistan, Iran and Singapore.

PM mourns death of folksinger Bari Siddiqui

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today expressed deep shock at the death of eminent folksinger, lyricist and flautist Bari Siddiqui.

In a condolence message, the prime minister recalled his outstanding contributions to enrich the country's folk songs, reports BSS.

"The people of the country have lost a popular folk singer... as long as folk songs exist in the country, he will remain alive," she said.

Sheikh Hasina also prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed her heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family.

PM's statement

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the incidents of enforced disappearances.

Responding to another question, Kafkhl said the BNP would not call for any hartal, protesting the power tariff hike.

Criticising the government for increasing the electricity price, the BNP leader said the hike would make the sufferings of the people worse as prices of daily essentials would go up subsequently, which would have put an adverse impact on the country's economy.

Ex-UP member

FROM PAGE 2
He said there was a feud between Sabuj and his rivals over establishing supremacy in the area.

Police are investigating the incident, the OC added.

Police sent the body to Pabna General Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Riyadh hosts

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by the Arab-US-Islamic Summit in Riyadh in May this year announced that the alliance member-states were ready to deploy 34,000 troops with a view to supporting operations against terrorist groups in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere.

The IMCTC, which has set up a joint operations centre in Riyadh, was established to serve as a platform for security cooperation, including the provision of training, equipment and troops, and the involvement of religious scholars to offer advice on how to deal with extremism.

On January 6, Pakistan's former army chief Gen (retd) Raheel Sharif was named as the Islamic Military Alliance's first commander-in-chief.

Egypt mosque attack

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US President Donald Trump condemned the attack as "horrible and cowardly".

"The world cannot tolerate terrorism, we must defeat them militarily and discredit the extremist ideology that forms the basis of their existence!" he wrote on Twitter.

UK foreign minister Boris Johnson condemned the "barbaric attack" in a post on Twitter, while his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian expressed his condolences to the families of victims of the "despicable attack".

Ahmed AbulGheit, head of the Arab League, which is based in Cairo, condemned the "terrifying crime which again shows that Islam is innocent of those who follow extremist terrorist ideology," his spokesman said in a statement.

The Islamic State group's Egypt branch has killed hundreds of policemen and soldiers, and also civilians accused of working with the authorities, in attacks in the north of the Sinai peninsula.

They have also targeted followers of the mystical Sufi branch of Sunni Islam as well as Christians.

The victims of yesterday's attack included civilians and conscripts praying at the mosque.

A tribal leader and head of a Bedouin militia that fights IS told AFP that the mosque is known as a place of gathering for Sufis.

The Islamic State group shares the puritan Salafi view of Sufis as heretics for seeking the intercession of saints.

The jihadists had previously kidnapped and beheaded an elderly Sufi leader, accusing him of practising magic which Islam forbids, and abduc-

ted Sufi practitioners later released after "repenting."

An IS propaganda outlet had published an interview earlier with the commander of its "morality police" in Sinai who said their "first priority was to combat the manifestations of polytheism including Sufism."

The group has killed more than 100 Christians in church bombings and shootings in Sinai and other parts of Egypt, forcing many to flee the peninsula.

The military has struggled to quell jihadists who pledged allegiance to IS in November 2014.

IS regularly conducts attacks against soldiers and policemen in the peninsula bordering Israel and the Palestinian Gaza Strip, although the frequency and scale of such attacks has diminished over the past year.

The jihadists have since increasingly turned to civilian targets, attacking not only Christians and Sufis but also Bedouin Sinai inhabitants accused of working with the army.

Aside from IS, Egypt also faces a threat from al-Qaeda-aligned jihadists who operate out of neighbouring Libya.

A group calling itself Ansar al-Islam - Supporters of Islam in Arabic - claimed an October ambush in Egypt's Western Desert that killed at least 16 policemen.

Many of those killed belonged to the interior ministry's secretive National Security Service.

The military later conducted air strikes on the attackers, killing their leader Emad al-Din Abdel Hamid, a most wanted jihadist who was a military officer before joining an al-Qaeda-affiliated group in Libya's militant stronghold of Derna.

Asked about security measures for Billal when he was taken in the raid, the DC said, "We usually take security measures and will be more careful in future."

Shiblee Noman, additional deputy commissioner, who was present at the briefing, claimed that police had no idea that such incident would take place.

The incident took place suddenly and he was killed, he claimed.

The officers claimed to have recovered a firearm and five bullets from the spot after Billal's "cohorts" had fled.

Three policemen were slightly injured, they claimed.

According to police, Billal was once a car-lifter but later formed a robbery gang. He along with his accomplices allegedly robbed a house in Nagdarpura in Khilgaon in October.

Some of the accused arrested in the case in their confessional statements said Billal had led the robbery, they added.

Nationwide celebration

FROM PAGE 1
upazilas and the capital.

Bangladesh missions abroad will also hold the similar programmes.

"The government has decided to celebrate the programme as the Unesco recognised Bangabandhu's historic March 7 speech as a world documentary heritage, which is a great achievement for the entire nation," said the cabinet secretary.

The DMP requested the intending participants of the procession to follow the route map and cooperate with the traffic division.

In the capital, the celebration will begin at noon through placing wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi Road-32.

Later, a procession from there will move towards Suhrawardy Udyan where Bangabandhu had delivered the landmark speech in a mammoth gathering on March 7, 1971.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to address a grand rally as the chief guest at the same venue at 3:00pm.

Following the PM's address, a cultural function and a laser show will also be held, the cabinet secretary added.

Besides, programmes in districts and upazilas will begin at 10:00am through placing wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu.

Apart from this, educational institutions across the country will organise essay, quiz and general knowledge competitions.

"These elections remind us that we are heading towards stability."

The vote will be carried out in two phases and most seats are expected to go to the three parties that have dominated the political stage for the last decade, regularly swapping power in a series of short-lived coalitions.

But some hope the devolution of power to the provinces will diminish their influence and alleviate the political impact of frequent changes of government.

"There is the chance, that although the musical chairs will continue, the effect it will have on national progress will be reduced," said Varughese.

The Maoist Party, formed by the ex-guerrillas after the war ended in 2006, has entered an electoral alliance with the communist CPN-UML party, creating a political behemoth that will be tough to beat.

In 2011, one of Lennon's molars sold for £19,500 to a Canadian cosmetic dentist.

John Lennon

FROM PAGE 16
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The diaries are on display at Berlin police headquarters with two pairs of his iconic Beatles concert on tape, sheet music, and a cigarette case.

Beatles memorabilia often fetches

Class-II girl 'raped' in Faridpur

Rapist on the run

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A girl of class-II was allegedly raped by a 28-year-old man in Shimulbazar area of Bhanga upazila Thursday afternoon.

Quoting the victim, neighbours said suspect Don Matabbor gained the girl's trust by offering her some biscuits. He then took her to a lemon orchard and raped her.

Hearing her screams for help, neighbours rushed to the spot and rescued the girl. She was admitted to a hospital.

Her father filed a case under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with Bhanga Police Station.

Gazi Robiul Islam, additional superintendent of police, said the suspect was on the run.

Khalilur Rhman, health and family planning officer of the upazila, said the girl's injuries were not life threatening.

Robber killed

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He was declared dead upon arriving at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, the DC said at a press conference at his office.

Since 2004, law enforcers have been giving similar accounts of events leading to deaths of around 800 suspects in custody, according to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra.

Around 1,900 people were shot and killed during the corresponding period in what the law enforcers claimed were incidents of crossfire, shootout or gunfight, it added.

Rights activists say when an arrested suspect is taken out for a "raid" he gets killed almost every time. The law enforcers should know that they would "come under attack" and should protect the suspect as such incidents keep continuing.

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Myanmar army

FROM PAGE 2

by senior United Nations officials.

According to a statement on the Facebook page of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, he and the Chinese leader yesterday discussed the "promotion of cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries, the situation of China standing on Myanmar's side at the forefront of the international community regarding the Rakhine issue," and other issues.

Min Aung Hlaing arrived in China on Tuesday and has largely met Chinese military officers during his visit.

The statement also said they discussed ongoing talks between Myanmar's government and myriad ethnic insurgent groups, some of whom are based along Myanmar's shared border with China.

According to Chinese state news agency Xinhua, Xi said China was closely watching the peace process and was "willing to play a constructive role... for security and stability in their border areas."

The Xinhua account did not mention Rakhine, but cited Xi saying that China "always respects Myanmar's sovereignty and territorial integrity".

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