

Mullah Omar's death mysterious: Pakistani daily

31/07/2015 20:43 by admin

Islamabad: Taliban leader Mullah Omar lived in secrecy and his death appears to have been just as mysterious, a Pakistani daily said on Friday.

An editorial in the News International said that Mullah Omar, who led the Taliban after it seized power in Kabul in 1996, lived in secrecy.

"Very few saw him, and images of the one-eyed leader are extremely rare. His death appears to have been just as mysterious," it said.

Afghan authorities said that Mullah Omar, who had fled to a secret location after the 2001 invasion of Kabul and then continued to lead the Taliban from his place of hiding, died in April 2013 at a Karachi hospital.

"Mullah Omar had not been seen in public since 2001, with both the US and Afghanistan claiming many times that he was hiding in Pakistan. Pakistan had always denied that Mullah Omar was based on its soil," said the daily.

It added that the man who had established close links with Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda after fighting alongside them following the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan may then have slipped away into the pages of history.

"The history he has left behind is brutal. The reign of the Taliban in Afghanistan was full of many horrors including severe discrimination against and brutal killing of Hazaras and other minority groups and the infamous destruction of the historical statues of the Buddha at Bamiyan. Mullah Omar's exit from Kabul was welcome by many."

The editorial wondered what impact the death of Mullah Omar will have on the Taliban and both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"The news of his death comes just days before an Afghan government delegation was due to meet Afghan Taliban leaders in Pakistan. This would have been the second round of talks between the two parties. The first round had taken place some weeks ago and had been followed by a statement apparently released by Mullah Omar in which he had welcomed the development," it said.

It went on to cite analysts who believed that Mullah Omar's death is a serious blow to the Afghan Taliban.

"However, if Omar has been dead for two years, an alternate command and control centre should already be in place. This structure has not been able to prevent the defection of several Taliban commanders to the Islamic State, which is a process that may now be accelerated with new reports of their supreme commander's death," it added.

- IANS