

Heavy fighting in central Bosnia

SARAJEVO, Sept 6: Fighting surged on two fronts in central Bosnia on Monday between Croat troops holding key supply routes and Muslim-led government forces apparently trying to wrest them away, reports AP.

The people in Jablanica, a town near the fighting, were reported to be destitute and hungry.

A UN official who visited the town confirmed earlier reports that it was crowded with between 7,000 and 10,000 refugees, most of them Muslims, expelled from Croat-held territory over the past two weeks.

A spokesman for the UN peacekeeping force, Lt Col Bill Aikman, reported heavy fighting around Fojnica and Vitez between Croat troops and forces of Bosnia's Muslim-led government.

He said government troops apparently were trying to gain control of a road near Vitez and a road linking Fojnica with Tarcin to the southeast for movement of troops and supplies.

Unconfirmed reports from the area said government troops had cut the road between Vitez and Novi Travnik, the main supply route for Croats in Vitez and Busovaca to the south. Bosnian radio also said government troops captured part of Novi Travnik in a counterattack.

Meanwhile, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic arrived in New York on Sunday for talks this week with the UN Security Council, Bosnia's UN representative said.

Izetbegovic is scheduled to meet with the full 15-member Security Council on Tuesday to explain his decision not to sign the Geneva peace plan.

He is scheduled to meet separately with the non-aligned members of the council — Cape Verde, Djibouti, Morocco, Pakistan and Venezuela — who are strong supporters of the Bosnian Muslims.

He may also meet with the five permanent members of the council — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — and Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Absconder held in city

By Staff Correspondent

An absconder of a criminal case was caught by his accuser from near the secretariat gate in the city and was handed over to the Ramna police yesterday morning.

A 35-year-old supervisor of a private transport company, Shamsur Rahman Moslem, told Ramna police that the accused Abdul Hai, 37, gouged out his left eye in Nazipur, Porojpur, on January 7 this year.

Moslem said, he found Abdul Hai roaming around near Gate No-5 of the Secretariat when he was entering the building at 11 am. He caught hold of Hai and handed him over to the police on duty.

Ramna police arrested Hai on suspicion under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr P C), said police.

Families of martyred intellectuals demand houses

By DU Correspondent

Children of the martyred intellectuals of the Dhaka University yesterday demanded permanent allotment of houses for their families.

In a press conference at the University Staff Quarters yesterday afternoon, they also demanded monthly allowances for their families.

The conference was addressed by A M Mohammed Masuduzzaman, son of Shaheed Professor A N M Muniruzzaman. Masuduzzaman said that they had applied to the concerned authorities through the DU for permanent houses.

Three out of six such families who had applied received government approval, Masuduzzaman said. But the families of Shaheed Professor A N M Muniruzzaman, Md Sadeque and Madhusudan Dey are yet to receive the approval.

The DU authorities sent a letter to the Prime Minister's office for a meeting with the children of the martyred intellectuals last month, Masuduzzaman said adding: "We have not yet received any answer to that letter."

Arafat fails to win

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stressed Syria's support for the rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, who, together with their institutions, have the right to decide what they see suitable."

Syria, a key partner in the peace process, had been irked by Arafat's failure to consult with any Arab leader during eight months of secret negotiations with the Israelis that led up to the proposed accord.

Therefore, Assad's half-hearted endorsement was the best Arafat could expect. Also, the fact that Assad received the PLO chairman with whom relations have been turbulent for more than two decades indicated that he at least has no plans to try to scuttle the accord.

Syria's support is crucial because it influences hard-line Palestinians such as Habash and Hawatmeh. However, Assad is not expected to rein in Palestinian radicals and other opposition groups until after he has secured his own accord

with Israel. Arafat's opponents have branded the accord a sellout that contains no guarantees for an independent Palestinian state.

There also were obstacles in Israel, which balks at recognizing the PLO until it pledges to delete references to Israel's destruction from its charter. But officials said they thought the differences could be resolved and the accord signed in Washington by Sept. 13.

Activity on the Israeli stock market was at a record high Sunday, buoyed by hopes for peace.

In Riyadh, the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council said Sunday it "welcomes the draft accord as a first step on the path to a just, durable and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian cause and Arab-Israeli conflict."

But Arafat must still face opponents of the deal in the PLO's decision-making executive committee in Tunis on Wednesday.

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Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at The Sangbad Ltd., 36 Purana Paltan, Dhaka. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct) Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR DHAKA.



US Ambassador William B Milam addressing a discussion meeting at the Supreme Court Bar Association premises yesterday. Bar president Kazi Golam Mahub (eyes closed), Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister Shaukat Ali Khan and Barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed are also seen among the seated. — Star photo

Saddam foils coup bid?

AMMAN, Sept 6: President Saddam Hussein foiled a coup by members of his Taktiri Clan at the end of July and ordered a wave of executions and arrests, Iraqi sources said here today, reports AFP.

They said "Dozens of executions and arrests" were carried out, but the exact number was unknown.

All those put to death were members of the Taktiri Clan, from Saddam's home region of Taktiri, while those arrested belonged to other families.

The report came as Saddam sacked Prime Minister Mohammad Hamza al-Zubaidi in a government shake-up.

He appointed Finance Minister Ahmad Hussein al-Khodair on Sunday to head the third government since the 1991 Gulf War.

Iraq gave no official reason for the nine changes to the government which came against a background of deepening economic and social problems caused by UN sanctions imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The Iraqi national congress, an exiled opposition movement based in London, said on August 29 that Saddam had executed five members of the regime including two from the Taktiri Clan.

Milam eulogises lawyers' role in movement for democracy

US Ambassador William B Milam yesterday eulogised the role of the members of the Supreme Court Bar Association in the movement for democracy in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

"Your contributions to the rule of law in the country have been significant," Milam said while addressing the members of the association at the Supreme Court premises.

Speaking on "The Role of Bangladesh Lawyers in Establishing Democracy" the US ambassador told them that "As guardians of the legal system, you should participate in the general debate on the types of laws Bangladesh should have, and how they are to be applied."

"In this way you will play a vital role in ensuring that human rights are fully respected in the country," he said.

Milam said, in all societies lawyers play the vital and central role in safeguarding human rights and in preserving democracy.

President of the association Kazi Golam Mahub presided over the function which was also addressed by Attorney General Aminul Huq.

Senior members of the association and its former presidents Dr Kamal Hossain, Shamsul Huq Chowdhury, Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Strajul Huq, S R

Paul, Amirul Islam and Motnul Hussain and secretary of the association Mahbub Alam spoke on the occasion.

Milam said except for a few renegade regimes, it is commonly accepted that every person has intrinsic worth, a notion which is at the core of human rights and fulfillment of the individuals and include the ability to freely participate in political and social life as well as in religious, artistic and intellectual activities.

Because government rules are sometimes arbitrary, he said individual rights must be maintained by strict adherence to legal codes, such as the national constitution or international covenants such as that Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Dr Kamal Hossain recalled the role played by the members of legal profession during the autocratic regime for restoration of democracy.

Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed said the bar associations' movement against the decision of the autocratic regime to bifurcate the High Court benches had ultimately turned into a movement for restoration of democracy.

Kazi Golam Mahub proposed a lawyers' exchange programme between Bangladesh and the USA.



Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng (L) and his Indian counterpart P V Narasimha Rao reviewing the honour guard during the arrival ceremony for the Indian Prime Minister yesterday outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. — AFP photo

Li, Rao

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to ease tensions along the mountainous border in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

At the start of Monday's meeting, Li said, "I believe that this very important visit of yours will strengthen the friendly relations and cooperation in every sphere between our two largest developing countries in the world."

Rao said he believed that "India and China cannot but come closer and closer and closer."

Dixit indicated that India will not allow the border dispute to jeopardize improving relations with China, which is viewed by New Delhi as a vast potential market.

But India may convey its anger over military cooperation between China and Pakistan, with which India has fought three wars. The United States has accused China of selling M-11 missile technology to Pakistan in violation of an international arms control pact. Beijing denies the charge.

The official newspaper China Daily reported that India and China plan to expand agricultural cooperation. India also may seek help in developing its space programme, which has been set back by Russia's withdrawal from a deal to supply rocket engines.

BPC earns net profit of Tk 310 crore

CHITTAGONG, Sept 6: Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation earned a net profit of Tk 309.92 crore after paying over Tk 1457 crore in taxes to the national exchequer in the last fiscal year, reports UNB.

BPC, one of the leading profit-earning public sector organisations, has set a target of profit to the tune of Tk 693 crore for the current fiscal year and paying Tk 1434 crore in taxes like VAT, income tax and dividend to the national exchequer.

An official handout said today the corporation earned a net profit of over Tk 358 crore and paid about Tk 1240 crore in taxes to the exchequer in 1991-92 while it earned a net profit of only Tk 94 crore in 1990-91. The profits in 1991-92 and 1992-93 were the highest and the second highest since inception of BPC.

Entrusted with catering to country's demand of petroleum products, BPC imported 1949,448 metric tons of crude oil and finished petroleum products in the last financial year. The import included 657,088 metric tons of diesel, about 34 per cent of the total. Country's present consumption of diesel is, however, about 50 per cent of the total demand.

The corporation exported 195,725 metric tons of surplus naphtha, furnace oil and bitumen produced as by-products

at the Eastern Refinery, a subsidiary of BPC and the lone oil refinery in the country.

Country's demand of petroleum products is over 19 lakh metric tons, out of which only three per cent has been provided with the condensate from the domestic gas fields and oil in Haripur oil field. It depends on import for the rest 97 per cent.

The corporation has been providing petroleum products through its three subsidiary companies — Jamuna Oil Company Limited, Meghna Petroleum Limited and Padma Oil Company Limited. Some 404 dealers, 994 agents and 179 LPG dealers under these three marketing companies have been engaged in distributing and marketing the petroleum products all over the country.

Private company

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both rural and urban community organisations with its package of study programme and materials.

Chairman of the executive committee M Aminul Islam and one of the directors Dr Khan Md Strajul Islam also spoke at the press conference.

Irregularities in Petrobangla alleged

Gross irregularities in selecting competent consultants were reported in the 152 million dollar Maddyapara Hard Rock Project, sources at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said yesterday, reports UNB.

The sources alleged that Petrobangla has illegally selected two more companies for overseeing the technical aspects of the hard rock mining project in Dinajpur. These companies were earlier disqualified by the evaluation committee.

According to the terms and conditions of the tender, the financial offers of the companies disqualified in technical papers are not to be opened by Petrobangla. Only six of the eight companies were found technically competent, the sources said.

Vested quarters within the Petrobangla were allegedly trying to include the two disqualified Chinese and British companies in the list of financial scrutiny to be done soon.

PM: Education

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grain worth nearly Tk 89 crore will be distributed under the "Food for Education" programme this year covering about 4,600 schools and benefiting some 7 lakh children from nearly 5 lakh families.

Each student attending a minimum of 85 classes in a month will be provided with 15 kg of wheat or rice. A family sending two or more children to school will receive a maximum of 30 kg wheat or rice or an equivalent amount of money each month.

The Prime Minister said the country's development was not possible without changing the lot of commonman the majority of whom live in rural areas.

AL senior leaders to attend N-dists programmes

Awami League presidium member and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad and some senior colleagues will attend the party's programmes in northern districts, reports UNB.

Party president and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina was scheduled to attend the programmes but cancelled her visit because of indisposition.

A party press release said presidium members Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, and Abdur Razzak, MP, General Secretary Zillur Rahman, Joint Secretary Abdul Jalil and other central leaders will also attend the public meetings and peasants' rallies in Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Syedpur and the Tin Bigha corridor.

Mizan: Raushan

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Drawing a parallel from the political history of the subcontinent, he said: "Mahatma Gandhi used to lead the All-India Congress from his prison cell. Sheikh Mujib used to lead the Awami League from jail. Likewise, Ershad is also running the JP from his current captivity."

Asked how he would manage to carry out his party programme securing the release of Ershad and a mid-term polls when his comrades-at-arms were trying to steal out of the country, Mizan Chowdhury said only Maudud Ahmed was leaving the country on the 9th of this month.

He hastened to add that he needed cooperation of everyone in the coming 'crusade' against the government.

The JP leader said with the support of all in the party, it would be easy for him to march ahead. "But if no one comes to my help, I shall continue the battle all by myself."

Asked what would befall his party programme for the proposed mass movement if the JP stalwarts, some of whom are involved in a number of criminal cases, are booked in the meantime, Mizan Chowdhury hoped the highest judiciary of the country would come to their rescue.

He said the High Court and the Supreme Court formed the only silver lining in this dismal scenario. "We have deep respect and confidence in the independence of our highest judiciary which invariably comes to our rescue in such a crisis. We are never denied justice by the High Court and Supreme Court."

Asked if he has managed to secure the support and blessings of his party leader, now in jail, to the proposed mass movement programme recently adopted by the JP central working committee, Mizan Chowdhury said he had not been able to contact Ershad and inform him of the prevailing political situation. He hastened to add: "We shall soon contact him to get his approval for the programme."

The Midnight File

Indian pilots return to duty

NEW DELHI, Sept 6: Air India pilots Monday called off an agitation that had forced cancellation of many flights and left thousands of international passengers stranded, a news agency reported. The pilots and cabin crew unions decided to return to work hours after the government asked foreign carriers to fly out the Air India passengers, who have been waiting at airports and hotels for three days, reports AP.

Tripura rebels surrender

GAUHATI, Sept 5: More than 750 armed guerrillas who had been fighting for the rights of tribespeople in northeastern India surrendered Monday, raising hopes for peace in the region. The guerrillas, dressed in olive green battle fatigues, queued up and handed over their rifles, revolvers and grenades to officials at Sikarbari village in Tripura state, about 800 kilometres (500 miles) southwest of Gauhati in response to an amnesty offer by the government, reports AP.

Quetta ANP chief shot dead

QUETTA (Pakistan), Sept 6: Unknown assailants shot dead an influential leader of a Pakistani left leaning party and injured two others, police said here today, reports AFP.

Abdul Wahid Khilji, 45, who was city president of the Awami National Party (ANP), died when the attackers pumped a fusillade of bullets into him outside his residence late Sunday.

Khilji's younger brother and another guest who were sitting with him on the lawns of the house were critically wounded, they said.

Police said one person was arrested early today in connection with the attack while the search for the main suspect was continuing.

The entire Quetta city has been cordoned off and police parties are conducting raids of his arrest, a senior police official in this Baluchistan province capital said.

The killing came only one day after another ANP leader and a minister in former premier Nawaz Sharif's government, Azam Hoti, escaped an assassination attempt in North West Frontier Province.

Hoti's two supporters died when gunmen ambushed his convey after an election rally Saturday.

However Quetta police today

Huge Indian goods seized

COMILLA, Sept 6: Bangladesh Rifles recovered a huge quantity of Indian smuggled goods from a truck at Bahutopa on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, reports UNB.

The contrabands include saree, lungi, bed covers and cloths worth about Tk 2.32 lakh.

PM opens

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tocratic regime. The Zia Memorial Museum has 12 galleries displaying the life and philosophy of Ziaur Rahman, a library with books on the nation's struggle for freedom and an auditorium with films on the Liberation War and the nation's march towards democracy.

The room in which Zia was shot dead on May 30, 1981 by some misguided members of the army has been enclosed with glass and the blood-stained carpet preserved in a glass casket. The blood stains on the floor and wall and bullet marks have also been covered with glass.

The Prime Minister unveiled the plaque of the museum and offered munajat after a brief function which was presided over by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum.

Addressing the function in an emotion-choked voice, Begum Zia said the museum was to uphold the life and works of the great leader for the future generations.

Shaheed President Zia's contribution was directed towards giving the people of independent Bangladesh a national identity. "He gave a new direction to the nation at that juncture, added new dimension to politics and introduced multiparty democracy," the Prime Minister said.

Begum Zia mentioned various steps and programmes initiated by the late leader to lead the country towards progress and prosperity.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, who was present at the Circuit House during the assassination of Ziaur Rahman, also addressed today's function. "Some great men live with the nation even after their death, and Ziaur Rahman is one of those few."

Communications Minister Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed, Forest and Environment Minister Abdullah Al Noman, Chittagong City Mayor Mir Mohammad Nasrudin, Cultural Secretary Islam Uddin Malik and Director General of National Museum Sheikh Akram Ali also spoke on the occasion.

Prof Jahanara Begum presented a model of the museum to Begum Zia.

The Prime Minister went round different galleries of the museum and later planted a Christmas sapling at the premises.

ruled out political rivalry as motive behind Khilji's murder which came as the campaign for next month's national and provincial elections got underway in Pakistan.

The deceased was a big landlord and "personal enmity" could be the reason for the killing, said an official who asked for anonymity.

Gold smuggler nabbed

By Staff Correspondent

An expatriate from Jeddah who evaded customs duty for 300 tolas of gold at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) Saturday was rounded up by police yesterday.

Customs intelligence force followed Mohammed Jamal Uddin upto the Daudkandi ferry ghat and recovered 30 gold bars each weighing 10 tolas concealed in Jamal's belt, said Rafiq Newaz Khan, a Superintendent of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate.

Four others — Sultan Ahmed, Gofran, Hakim Mohammad Elias and Hafez Abu Bakar — who were travelling with Jamal in a car from Dhaka to Feni Sunday, were also taken to custody by Ramna police.

Customs officials estimated the value of the seized items, including the car (Dhaka Metro-KA-03-6374) at Taka 26.13 lakh.

The customs department said Jamal came to Dhaka from Jeddah by Biman's BG-038 flight last Saturday.

Body to probe SMC incident

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Sept 6: A five-member committee headed by Principal Dr Enayetullah has been formed to enquire into the incidents at the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital in which agitated intern doctors ransacked the office of the Head of the Department of Paediatrics on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the intern doctors of the hospital are on strike demanding the resignation of the Director of the hospital. They were reportedly angry about the Director's action in detecting the advance signing of the attendance register by some intern doctors who were actually absent.

Minor Irrigation

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terest from the farmers in drawing upon this money to buy irrigation equipment. Opinions about the reason behind this many.

The Ministry of Agriculture believes that Bangladeshi farmers do not have enough income to buy irrigation equipment at market price.

The WB does not believe that irrigation cost with private purchase of irrigation equipment will be any higher than the BADC supplied irrigation. They believe that the reason that farmers do not have the money to buy the irrigation equipment is the collapse of foodgrain prices.

With foodgrain prices at the current low level there is very little hope of enough interest among farmers to spend money on shallow tubewells and low-lift pumps. Accordingly, the WB has already recommended that a major chunk of the 70 million dollar credit be cancelled.

While the WB and the Ministry of Agriculture are trying to get a grip on the problem of eliciting farmers' interest in minor irrigation equipment, promotion of winter crops is experiencing serious setback.

Following a major agricultural sector reviews by the UNDP in 1989, a target of expanding foodgrain production by promoting winter crops (particularly boro) has been adopted. This strategy relied on expansion of minor irrigation facility. With 120 million dollar credit made available to finance this expansion largely unutilised over two years, winter crop based foodgrain output growth is unlikely to reach the potential of four per cent.