

War flares on several fronts in Bosnia

SARAJEVO, Sept 15: Muslim-led forces and Bosnian Serbs battled for strategic areas in the north and along a newly reopened battlefield in central Bosnia. UN officials said Thursday, reports AP.

Exchanges of artillery fire were reported near Brcko in the northeast, where Serbs hold a vital corridor that links Serbia with territory they control in northern Bosnia and Croatia.

In the central part of the country, Bosnian military sources claimed they had made some gains this week against Serb forces along an important Bosnian government supply route near the town of Konjic.

Fighting also centered on the Bihac area of northwestern Bosnia, which has been under Muslim-led government control since troops last month vanquished a rebel Muslim leader who was cooperating with Serbs.

Also Thursday, UN commanders in Bosnia met senior NATO military officers to discuss violations of UN-declared "safe areas" in Bosnia, including Bihac.

French Gen. Bertrand de Lapresle, commander of UN peacekeepers in the former Yugoslavia, told NATO's military committee that the situation in Bihac was not serious enough to provoke NATO air strikes, sources said.

The war in Bosnia broke out in April 1992 when Serbs rebelled against a vote by Croats and Muslims to leave Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. An estimated 200,000 people are dead or missing.

Konjic, southwest of Sarajevo, is along the main government supply route from the Croatian coast to government-held territory in central and northern Bosnia.

The Bosnian government forces appeared to be trying to secure the corridor against Serb attacks, and also take advantage of a perceived Serb

Govt urged to accept demand for interim govt

By Staff Correspondent

Leading members of the intelligentsia of the country have urged the government to resolve the present political crisis arising out of the demand for a caretaker administration.

Some 45 poets, professionals, teachers and artists, meeting at the Dhanmondi residence of Sufia Kamal Thursday said, free and fair elections cannot be held under any political government.

"For this reason, the demand for a caretaker government has now become a national demand," they said in a press statement.

They said, holding elections under caretaker governments can be a better way of ensuring free and fair elections in future.

They also urged all political parties and the government to come to a consensus on the issue.

Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Justice KM Sobhan, Shamsur Rahman, Prof Fazlul Halim Chowdhury, former ambassador Waliur Rahman, actor Asaduzzaman Noor, architect Mazharul Islam, Prof Mustafa Nurul-Islam, and painter Hashem Khan attended the meeting.

Prokrichi

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months, but the administration cadre managed to get their exclusive order ready within a day.

The press conference was also addressed by, among others, Chairman of the council Dr MA Mazed, Vice-Chairman Akhter Hossain, Dr Zaved Iqbal, Abu Yusuf, Mesbah Uddin and Gasuddin Milky. The Prokrichi-BCS leaders said that the administration cadre had only 4148 members. "Thus, the promotions this time would make a peculiar organisational structure which never existed in the world before."

They demanded a judicial inquiry into how the matter.

Certain influential quarter in the bureaucracy was leading the government to take controversial decisions," they said.

Home Minister's statement motivated: Zillur

Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday

condemned the Home Minister's statement about the security to opposition leader Sheikh Hasina and termed it 'motivated,' reports UNB.

He said Sheikh Hasina had pointed to constant surveillance on her usual political activities by the government's intelligence and not about her security.

But Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury in his statement in Parliament on Wednesday avoided the matter tactfully and raised irrelevant issues and dished out "falsehoods," Zillur said.

The Awami League leader said the security measures for Sheikh Hasina were arranged by acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on his personal initiative. Such arrangements were also made for Begum Khaleda Zia at that time.

After assuming power the BNP government has not made any additional security arrangements for the opposition leader. On the contrary, the government tried to withdraw the arrangement provided by Justice Shahabuddin.

Referring to security at Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi, Zillur said after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with members of his family, the Home Ministry took over charge of that house and placed it under police protection.

He said Chowdhury's 'false statement' about the security at Bangabandhu Bhaban is 'unfortunate.'

Zillur said letters to the opposition leader were being censored and her telephone bugged for a long time. Her political activities at Mintu Road and outside were closely watched by the intelligence services on instruction from the government.

2 Indian vessels seized at Zakiganj

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Sept 15: The customs authorities at Zakiganj border in Sylhet impounded two Indian cargo vessels yesterday. The vessels were seized while they were entering the Bangladesh territory through the river Kushiara, without valid papers, said a customs official.

The official, however, refused to give any further details. The vessels were carrying various goods from the Calcutta port.

Weavers

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The demands include withdrawal of all cases against the weavers, exemption of their loans, rehabilitation of the weavers affected by floods and other natural disasters, and the setting up of a handloom ministry and a handloom bank to help the weavers get loans on easy terms and conditions.

The General Secretary of the association alleged that the government has completely failed to solve the problems of the handloom sector. The Weavers' Credit Scheme launched by the government could not fulfil the aspirations of the weavers, he said.

He said, if the government was sincere in providing the people with fabrics at a lower price, it would have taken pragmatic steps to develop this prospective sector by removing the problems of the weavers.

He said about 42 lakh families of the weavers are now leading an inhuman life due to the "wrong policies" of the government.

He announced that the Samity would start holding rallies and workers' meetings at the district level from October 16 and exchange views with the leaders of various political and professional organisations from November 7 to drum up support for their demands.

China against invasion of Haiti

BEIJING, Sept 15: China said today it opposes the US threat to invade Haiti, saying it did not approve of the use of force to solve international disputes, reports Reuters.

"We always stand for a peaceful solution to all international disputes and conflicts through patient negotiations," the Foreign Ministry spokesman's office said in answer to a question on the increasingly tense situation in the Caribbean.

"We are not in favour of the exertion of pressure at will or even the resort to the use of force."

US President Bill Clinton vowed on Wednesday to oust Haiti's military rulers by force if they do not leave voluntarily.

China is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.



Foreign Secretary M R Osmany welcomed the Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku on his arrival for a five-day visit to Bangladesh at Zia International Airport yesterday. — PID photo

C'wealth Secy-Gen in city

The Commonwealth Secretary General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku yesterday said that he would discuss the agenda of the upcoming Commonwealth Summit with the Bangladesh government leaders, reports BSS.

Talking to newsmen at the Zia International Airport on his arrival here on a five-day official visit the Secretary General said that he was in the process of discussing the agenda with the member countries.

The summit of the 51-member Commonwealth is scheduled to take place at Auckland, New Zealand, next year.

The Secretary General said that he would discuss during his stay here on how Bangladesh-Commonwealth relations could be strengthened.

He described the existing relationship between Bangladesh and Commonwealth as "excellent", "very good" and "very special".

The Secretary General said that he would pay a courtesy call on the President and have discussions with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

Besides, he said, he would also meet the representatives of a number of institutions, his itinerary indicate he would visit BRAC and the Grameen Bank.

10 killed in Kabul fighting

KABUL, Sept 15: Ten civilians were killed and scores were wounded, many of them children, in a bloody surge of fighting this morning between rival Shiite factions in south Kabul, reports AFP.

Doctors said 10 corpses and 85 wounded had been admitted to the local Karte Se hospital before noon. Many of the casualties were screaming and bleeding children wounded in a direct rocket hit on a house celebrating a marriage.

"The wounded are coming in so fast they are not all registered yet," a harried hospital worker said, "perhaps another 15-20 patients have yet to be added to the book."

The clashes first erupted early Wednesday, when 12 people were reported killed and 140 wounded.

Mortar rounds were landing Thursday in the river alongside the hospital as stretcher bearers carried in fresh casualties, one of whom was a blood-spattered woman whose clothes were scorched and still smouldering from a rocket blast.

Hasina protests 'false' cases against AL activists

Sheikh Hasina yesterday strongly protested the filing of cases under Anti-Terrorism Act against Awami League leaders and workers in different wards and unions of Demra thana in connection with hartals on September 11-13, reports UNB.

The Awami League President in a statement alleged that the cases were filed against her workers conspiratorially. She demanded immediate withdrawal of the 'false' cases against them.

Those who were charged include M Mozammel Haq, Kafil Uddin, M Soni, Masum Molla, Kazi Habibur Rahman, Sanaulah, Liton, Alam, Sultan, Majibur Rahman Manir, Majibur Rahman Manju, Mahfuz, Nayan, Khokon, Shahin, Ratan, Yusuf, Jinnat, Siddiqui Rahman, Bakul, Helaluddin, Babul, Shamsuzzaman, Rafiqul Islam and Khairul Alam.

Alleged move to politicise Muktijoddha Sangsad protested

By Staff Correspondent

Some leaders of the Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad central command council have condemned the alleged move to 'politicise' the organisation.

Addressing a press conference in the city yesterday, Vice Chairman of the council S M Badruddoza alleged that efforts were being made to elect a high official of the National Security Intelligence (NSI) as Chairman of the Sangsad in violation of its constitution.

He alleged that the names of genuine freedom fighters were excluded from the voters' list and fake names were included.

It was stated at the press conference that a high government official cannot contest elections for the chairmanship of an organisation like the Muktijoddha Sangsad.

Abdur Rashid, Habibur Rahman and Belal Ahmed also spoke at the press conference.

Liberia

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tackers) are still held up in the Executive Mansion... but it has been cordoned off by our troops and quite a number of the soldiers and officers who participated in the shooting have surrendered," Brig Gen A S Mukhtar, chief of staff of the African army, told the Associated Press in a telephone interview.

He said members of the Armed Forces of Liberia had started moving in on the mansion, the national radio station and the telecommunications centre at around 2 am.

Monrovia's streets were deserted and the few people on the streets around the troubled area appeared to be Liberian soldiers, according to a resident reached by telephone, who requested anonymity.

National radio began broadcasting hours late, around 9.30 am, but only played African dance music.

Card phone in Srinagar

Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury opened the ISD card phone system at Srinagar in Munshiganj district by talking to President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

While talking to the Deputy leader, President Biswas underscored the need for further expansion of the telecommunication system for overall development of the country.

He said, "Telephone is the medium of quick communication and closely linked up with infrastructural development."

Minister for Post and Telecommunications Tariqul Islam was present on the occasion.

President Biswas conveyed his best wishes to the people of Srinagar on this happy occasion and hoped that all important places will be connected by the card phone system as early as possible.

The Telecommunication Minister informed the President that 728 card phones have so far been installed in different places in the country and initiatives have been taken for installation of more card phones on priority basis.

The Midnight File

Gaddafi expresses solidarity with Haiti's military rulers

TUNIS, Sept 15: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi expressed solidarity with Haiti's military rulers and called ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide a "butcher and a dictator." The United States is preparing to invade a small country named Haiti because it has changed its regime," Gaddafi said in a speech quoted today by the Libyan news agency Jana, reports Reuter.

12 more killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Sept 15: Twelve persons, including eight militants and a revenue official, were killed and 12 militants captured while extra security steps were taken around the six-storey building of civil secretariat following attempt by militants to blow it up in the Kashmir valley since last evening. The Jammu and Kashmir police personnel repulsed an attack by militants on a police post at Gotta village in Udhampur district while authorities lifted day curfew in Kistwar town of Doda district in Jammu region, reports PTI.

16 slain in Algeria

ALGIERS, Sept 15: The bodies of 16 civilians were found beheaded and mutilated, a newspaper reported Thursday, as violence continued despite government concessions to Muslim fundamentalists, reports AP.

Newly freed fundamentalist leaders reportedly began meeting with colleagues and speculation increased that their Islamic Salvation Front may be legalised as negotiators prepared for a new round of talks next week.

But critics accused the government of selling out and militants kept up their battle.

Pakistan to acquire subs from France, UK soon

ISLAMABAD, Sept 15: Pakistan is in the final phase of negotiations with France and Britain over the sale of non-nuclear attack submarines, the head of the Pakistan Navy, Admiral Saad Khan, was quoted today as saying.

The talks could wrap up soon, he was quoted by the official news agency APP as saying.

Pakistan currently has two Agosta and four Daphne submarines, all French-built and at least 25 years old.

Asian confce

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Pointing out the success story of oral saline in fighting diarrhoea, Dr Gazi told the journalists at the BMA Bhaban yesterday. "Various organisations and the media played a vital role by popularising diarrhoea preventive methods which helped reduce the number of deaths."

The conference was also addressed by BMA president Dr MA Mazed, Dr Fakrul Islam Chowdhury, Dr Azizul Haq and Dr K S A Aziz.

The theme of the conference is "1994, the diarrhoea prevention year through social mobilisation". The World Health Organisation (WHO), Unicef and ICDDR,B co-sponsored the conference.

The participating countries are India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, USA, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Thailand and host country Bangladesh.

Twelve scientific and five plenary sessions will be held during the two-day conference which will be addressed by eminent scientists from USA and India. More than 100 papers will be presented in the session.

The members of the current ASCOD organising committee include Dr Mazed — president, Prof K M S Aziz general secretary and Dr Yakub Al Mazed, vice president, from Saudi Arabia.

PM visits

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district would fall by 30 per cent in the current Aman season.

Later, Begum Zia dashed to Palashbari in Nilphamari and visited the drought-affected areas.

The government has made arrangements to supply fertiliser to the farmers at the government rate under the direct supervision of Deputy Commissioner, she told gatherings of people.

She further announced that besides the special test relief, more open market rice sale centres would be opened in the drought-hit areas.

The Prime Minister asked the people to face the drought with fortitude and patience. "Don't worry, the government is with you."

After visiting the areas, she attended a meeting of local leaders, elite and officials for taking stock of the situation.

Begum Zia later visited the drought-affected areas of Baidiand in Thakurgaon and addressed a big gathering. She asked the people to prepare their cultivable land for the next crop and avail agricultural loans and other facilities being provided by the government to make up their losses.

She advised the farmers and landless people not to depend only on agriculture but to involve themselves in alternative income generation schemes like poultry and dairy farming and pisciculture.

After ending her visit to the drought-stricken areas, she held a meeting with the DCs of greater Dinajpur and Rangpur districts, officials concerned, local elite and leaders as well as peasant leaders for an appraisal of the problems of the districts.

Agriculture and Water Resources Minister Majid-ul-Huq, State Minister for Planning Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Harun-ur-Rashid, Prof Abdul Hafiz, MP, Rebeka Mahmud, MP, and other local leaders accompanied the PM.

Hasina explains stand

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Referring to the Opposition boycott of Parliament, Hasina admitted that it is Parliament where all important issues ought to be deliberated and national policies decided.

"But have you seen such a process in Bangladesh since the BNP came to power? How many times has the Leader of the House attended the House or participated in debates? Has she ever replied to a question put to her by the members?" the opposition leader questioned.

She said the Deputy Leader of the House, not being a minister and perhaps less than fully aware of government's plans and deliberations, is the one who stands up to speak for the government.

She said out of the first 94 bills passed by the House only four were introduced as Bills. The remaining 90 were first issued as Ordinances and then brought to the House to put parliamentary stamps.

The parliamentary committees fail to function properly because BNP ministers who chair these committees are blocking critical discussion on investigations. "How can we stamp out corruption in the government when Parliament is not allowed by the BNP government to play its proper role?" Indeed the BNP has rendered Parliament totally ineffectual, she alleged.

In her speech, Sheikh Hasina criticised the government policy of 'politicisation'.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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