

Deadliest phase of battle soon Lankan troops a km away from Jaffna

COLOMBO, Nov 1: Sri Lankan security forces today braced for the deadliest phase in a battle to capture the rebel-held town of Jaffna as a humanitarian crisis involving tens of thousands of war refugees unfolded, reports AFP.

Some 7,000 government troops made slow progress and advanced less than a kilometre towards Jaffna, the final bastion of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the military said.

Tamil Nadu on alert

Meanwhile, Police in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu have been placed on alert for a possible infiltration of Tamil rebels fleeing an advancing army in Sri Lanka, senior intelligence officers said today.

"We are keeping a watch on the airport, ports and carrying out random checks at railway stations for any possible infiltration," a senior intelligence officer told Reuters.

The officer, who asked not to be named, said security for Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalitha had also been intensified.

Jayalitha has been a target of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) since she ordered police in Tamil Nadu in 1991 to crack down on rebels taking refuge in the state.

Normalcy returns to Rangpur town

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Nov 1: BDR personnel were withdrawn last night from the Rangpur Medical College campus and town areas as the situation was returning to normalcy. Doctors at the Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) resumed their duties today. Private practitioners who also had stopped working since Saturday last fearing attacks also attended their chambers.

Number of the out-door patients increased substantially in the RMCH. Meanwhile, a two-member enquiry team headed by ADM Khalilur Rahman has been constituted to probe into the violent incident at the RMC that took place on Saturday.

The team will interview the eyewitnesses at the Rangpur Circuit House from 11 am to 2 pm tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the authorities have rescheduled the 4th and 5th year MBBS examinations. Examinations scheduled for November 1, 2 and 4 will now be held on Nov 6 and 9.

Dalai Lama forced to cancel SA visit

JOHANNESBURG, Nov 1: The Dalai Lama was forced to cancel a visit to South Africa when his aircraft blew a tyre at Bombay Airport and no other transport was available, organisers said today, reports Reuters.

The Dalai Lama was due to lecture at Johannesburg's Witwatersrand University on Thursday as a guest of the world conference on religion and peace.

Two killed in road accident

By Staff Correspondent

Two passengers were killed on the spot when two speeding minibuses collided while trying to overtake each other near the secretariat at the Abdul Ghani Road in the city at around 7:30 am yesterday.

The identity of the victims could not be ascertained till writing this report at night. The bodies were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue.

Ramna police said, both the buses entered the road which is forbidden for buses to ply on. "The speeding buses were locked in a race on the road and at one point they collided," said the Ramna thana duty officer.

One of the buses was seized by the police, but the driver fled. A case was filed with Ramna thana.

Old man chopped to death

JHENIDAH, Nov 1: An old man was chopped to death by some unidentified miscreants at Anipur village in Shaik-kupa thana on Tuesday. Police said Abdur Rahman Mollah, 60, of the village was killed by the miscreants when he was returning home at about 9 pm, reports UNB.

Code of Conduct

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off their expenses through bank cheques which will enable the EC determine the expenses.

When asked whether the amount was realistic, the CEC said personally he wanted to raise the ceiling to a "practical level" because "any impractical rule might be broken." But it was the decision of the major parties," he added.

Highlighting the major points of the COC, Justice Sadeque said an electoral inquiry committee would be formed comprising judicial officials to probe pre-election irregularities.

With the announcement of the election schedule, ministers will be restrained from using the state-run media and other official facilities, official rest house, circuit house or government offices for campaign purpose.

About polls projection on the state-run radio and television, he said "We have proposed to ensure rational coverage for all contesting parties." He however told a questioner that ensuring rational coverage by the electronic media will not depend on the EC. He informed that the EC would hold a meeting with the radio and television officials tomorrow.

As per the COC, after the announcement of the election schedule, the candidate will neither commit subscription to any organisation or pledge development project in any constituency. But the candidate might place the overall development plan or policy of his or her party.

will not bring out processions with torch, truck, bus or any other vehicles. The COC prohibits setting up of any election camp on the street or any other place, used by members of the public and entertainment of voters in these camps.

Erecting expensive arches, printing four-colour posters, writing on walls, using arms or other lethal weapons during processions and giving indecent or provocative statements are also restricted by the COC.

Asked whether the EC will remain neutral during polls depending on government officials, Justice Sadeque said the EC in any country has to depend on the officials since it can not afford a large number of staff for whole the year. During polls, the government officials working for election will be under the jurisdiction of the EC and the EC could take action if they violate any rule.

Replying to a question Secretary of the EC Ershadul Haq said preparation and distribution of identity (ID) cards was hampered due to hartal and delay in printing of the blank cards though the work began on October 8.

Asked whether the EC would propose suspension of the relevant law if it fails to give cards to all 5.60 crore voters before next elections, Election Commissioner Justice M A Jalil said, it would be decided later if ID cards for all cannot be prepared.

Additional Secretary of the EC S M Zakaria and Director of ID Card Project Mir Beylayet Hossain were also present on the occasion.

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The BGMEA brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding an end to political impasse. — Star photo

Garments

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governments sector and it will be difficult for them to meet the 'quota deadline' — December 31 — and they will suffer losses of crores of taka because of 'stocklocks'.

The situation will worsen if the Opposition's six-day hartal is observed, they mentioned.

Garments factory owner Munir Hossain said they are failing to face the challenge of free market economy as they have been compelled to close their factories due to frequent hartals.

He criticised the Opposition leadership for their 'failure' to find out any alternative to hartals.

His suggestion that fast untodeath could be an alternative created a pandemonium at the rally.

In a resolution, the rally urged the opposition political parties to Chittagong Port, Mongla Port, Zia International Airport and Benapole land port out of the purview of all political programmes and demanded of the government to take necessary steps to ensure that the ports operate unhindered.

The rally was addressed by, among other garments owners, Faizul Karim, Saifur Islam, Tipu Monshi, Harunur Rashid, Abul Kashem Haider, Reazuddin Ahmed, Wazaer Akand, Anisul Haq, Luthfur Rahman, Farid Ahmed and Badal Roy.

BGMEA Vice President Fazlul Huq, and M A Taher and other leaders of the association were also present.

How Hasina's letter reached Mannan

By Farid Hossain

When her personal staff handed over to her the Prime Minister's letter on Saturday night, Sheikh Hasina did not open it immediately. The Awami League chief waited until Sunday morning and opened the letter in front of some senior party leaders, including Abdus Samad Azad and Zillur Rahman.

Having read the letter Hasina called an emergency meeting of the party's central working committee on Sunday afternoon mainly to discuss Khaleda Zia's letter at the Bangabandhu Avenue office of the party. Some of the senior leaders of the party, who also read the letter in the morning at Hasina's residence, were asked to draft a reply separately to the Prime Minister's letter. Hasina arrived at the working committee meeting with a draft of her own.

The meeting discussed the replies prepared by leaders like Zillur Rahman, SAMS Kibria and Suranjit Sengupta. Finally, it unanimously accepted the reply drafted by Hasina herself, incorporating some minor changes. In preparing her draft Hasina retracted an earlier letter written to the Opposition by BNP leader Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, which contained the neutral caretaker government as an agenda of talks between the government and the Opposition. From the

meeting, Hasina went home happy, her version of the handwritten draft approved by the party.

On Monday morning her idea was that she will print the letter and sign it only after her staff set an appointment with the Prime Minister so that the party's General Secretary Zillur Rahman can deliver it directly to Khaleda Zia. Begum Zia was not available for such an appointment throughout Monday and also until Tuesday evening since she was away in some flood-affected areas.

By Tuesday evening it became clear to the Awami League leaders that they will not be able to deliver the letter directly to Begum Zia. Hasina then recalled the letter she wrote for the Prime Minister on her personal computer and pressed the 'print' button without any hesitation. Folding the letter she herself put it into an envelope leaving the job of sealing it to a personal staff member. And the postmen were Prof Abu Sayeed, Awami League secretary for Education and Research and Naquib Ahmed, Hasina's Assistant Private Secretary — they delivered it to BNP's acting Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at his residence around 9:30 pm.



Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic (C) answers to reporters' questions after his late arrival Tuesday at Wright Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, to attend the Balkan peace talks. US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke is also seen on the right. — AFP/UNB photo

Leaders arrive Dayton for Bosnia talks

DAYTON (Ohio), Nov 1: All parties to the war in Bosnia assembled on a remote US military base today to start the search for a way out of the carnage. Mediators brought in a peace plan and said the whole world was watching, reports Reuters.

"Today the eyes of the world are on Dayton. We've come here to the heartland of America to try to bring peace to the heart of Europe," US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said upon arrival at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, some 500 miles from Washington and the site of negotiations Cocooned in Spartan, fortress-like seclusion.

"We're embarking today on a process that may well be the last, best chance for peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina," he said "I hope that some day Dayton, Ohio, will be remembered as the place where the killing was finally brought to a halt."

He was to preside later today over opening ceremonies for the open-ended talks among the presidents of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia —

Group of 5 meets PM

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solve the political impasse over the caretaker government issue.

A brief press release issued on behalf of the group said that they expect to meet Awami League president Sheikh Hasina as soon as it is convenient for her. The group has already approached Sheikh Hasina for an appointment to brief her on the outcome of yesterday's meeting.

"The group of citizens hope to meet the Awami League president in a couple of days", the source said.

The source said the group briefed the Prime Minister on their last meeting with Sheikh Hasina held on October 21. In that meeting the AL chief had said that her party was ready for discussions with the ruling party if the concept of a 'neutral person' to head the caretaker government was acceptable to Khaleda Zia.

The two leaders— Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina— exchanged letters on the persisting political crisis. On October 28, Prime Minister in her letter invited Sheikh Hasina for a dialogue with an open mind to find a solution to all problems relating to the next elections.

Sheikh Hasina, replied to the letter on October 31. Although contents of the letter were not disclosed to the press, Hasina was learnt to have stated that she was ready to sit for talks if held on specific agenda — a neutral caretaker government for holding elections.

The group of five met the PM thrice and the former leader of the Opposition in Parliament twice so far.

Yesterday's meeting with the PM lasted for about two hours.

Mussallis call off sit-in

Hundreds of followers of the Pir of Char Monai, a Muslim spiritual leader, called off their sit-in demonstration in front of the National Press Club yesterday, reports UNB.

They had converged there since Tuesday morning at the call of the Pir, Moulana Syed Mohammad Fazlul Karim, for an indefinite sit-in demonstration programme to press for an immediate solution to the country's present political crisis.

But the programme was called off at the request of some political leaders," the Pir said.

Some changes in admin

By Staff Correspondent

Some changes have been made in the upper tier of the administration, according to a government handout yesterday.

Joint Secretary of the Labour and Manpower Ministry Shah Mohammad Nazmul Alam has been transferred to the Ministry of Science and Technology. He has been replaced by an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) Abdur Rouf.

A H M Fazlul Haq, an OSD, has been appointed Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, while Abdul Qaiyum Thakur, another OSD, has been appointed Joint Secretary of the Planning Division.

OSD Capt (Retd) Zamilur Rahman Khan has been appointed Joint Secretary of the Rural Development and Cooperative Division, while another OSD Ali Akbar Bhuiyan has been attached with the Ministry of Environment and Forest.

Joint Chief of the BCS (Economy) cadre Abdullah Al Faruq has been appointed Joint Chief of the Ministry of Water Resources.

School student electrocuted

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 1: A school student Manir, 13, was electrocuted while his sister Reba, 17, a college student was injured seriously in the same incident at Daspara village under Baufal thana of Pataukhali district this afternoon.

Police and witnesses said, Manir and Reba were trying to require their TV antenna on roof. Suddenly the antenna touched a nearby 33KV electric line.

Critically injured Reba was admitted to Baufal Thana Health Complex.

Hasina

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which would remain accountable to the voters.

Criticising the Prime Minister for ignoring the Opposition demand for caretaker government, the AL leader said: "Possibly, the Prime Minister is suffering from delusion. Otherwise, how she could forget about caretaker government in 1995 when she had understood it in 1990."

Branding the government as inefficient and corrupt, the opposition leader blamed the Prime Minister for rendering parliament ineffective. She also criticised the government for failing to check the price-hike of essential commodities.

The rally was organised in connection with the joining of some retired civil servants and political leaders from different parties to the Awami League.

Those who joined include former Additional Secretary S M Akram, Golam Mostafa BSc and Flight Sgt (rid) Nuruzaman from Narayanganj and ex-AIG A K M Mahbulul Huq from Narsingdi.

Party leaders Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Moshleh Uddin Bhuiya, Mafizul Islam and Anwar Al also spoke on the occasion.

'Rain paralyses Ctg city life

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 1: Rain paralysed life in the port city today.

Rainfall started in the port city and its surrounding areas yesterday evening under the influence of a seasonal low over the South Bay and may continue tomorrow. Met office said. Met office recorded 44 mm rainfall from 6 am to 6 pm today. Port officials said day-long intermittent rain affected cargo handling inside the jetties but ship movement was normal in the port channel.

Most people stayed indoors and traffic on city's roads was thin.

Jessore Shibir calls hartal today

JESSORE, Nov 1: The Chhatra Shibir, Jessore district branch, has called for a half-day hartal tomorrow to protest the killing of one of its members, reports BSS.

Akhteruzzaman, reportedly a Shibir activist died in a clash between the Islami Chhatra Shibir and the Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists at Bahachara Afiluddin College campus yesterday. Ten others were injured in the clash.

Police super, Jessore, however, told BSS that late Akhteruzzaman was not at all a student. Late Zaman was a married person and was leading a family life.

Meanwhile, the Shibir today held a protest rally at the Baghara bazar.

The Midnight File

17 killed in Pak road accident

ISLAMABAD, Nov 1: At least 17 people were killed and 18 badly injured in a road accident today near the town of Sukkur in the southern Pakistani province of Sindh, the official APP news agency reported. It said a crowded passenger van collided head-on with an oil tanker, police and ambulance workers were still recovering bodies from the wreckage, reports Reuters.

Asian Art Biennial

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yesterday the State Minister for Cultural Affairs, Jahan Ara Begum expressed the hope that a long-awaited all-Asian artists' association will be established during the event.

The Secretary for Cultural Affairs, Mokslesur Rahman, Director General of Shilpakala, Mobarak H Khan and its Director of Fine Arts, Subir Chowdhury also addressed the conference.

The Asian Art Biennial, previously titled Asian Art Biennale was conceived by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1981. Only 15 nations participated in the first five and the number rose to 26 at the 6th Biennial, held in 1993.

This year's participating countries are: Australia, Bahrain, Bhutan, China, India, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Palestine, Qatar, Syria, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, UAE, Yemen, Russian Federation, Myanmar, Lebanon, Hong Kong and host Bangladesh.

The budget for this year's

205 sqkm ice chunk

USHUAIA, Argentina, Nov 1: A chunk of ice measuring 205 square kilometers (82 square miles) has broken loose in the Antarctic due to warming waters, officials said, reports AFP.

The 32-block, which broke off from the Larsen Ice Breaka, has floated nearly 500 kilometers northeast in the Drake passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans near the southern tip of Argentina.

The meteorological centre of the Antarctic is following movements of the stray block via satellite.

BNP programmes to continue till Nov 10

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will continue its ongoing organisational, publicity and mass contact programmes in all thanas and the programmes of meetings, rallies and processions at districts level till November 10, a press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

12 more killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Nov 1: At least 12 people were killed in separate incidents today in Kashmir, two days after the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited the strife-torn region, police said, reports AFP.

Officials said five unidentified bodies were recovered from Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir, while four people were shot dead by Kashmiri Muslim militants elsewhere in this city.

Security troops gunned down three Muslim guerrillas during search operations today in the Kashmir's frontier districts of Mughalpora and Kupwara, the officials said here.

The killings were reported two days after a first-ever ICRC delegation reached Kashmir on Monday to visit detainees held in Indian prisons in the Himalayan valley.

Kidnapped boy

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Aparajeyo Bangla of the university with the ransom.

As Motijheel thana was kept informed about the latest development, a group of plain clothed policemen lied in wait near the spot.

At around 2:30 pm, a youngman approached Sanaulah and asked him whether he had brought the ransom money.

The plain clothed policemen caught the youngman, Asaduzzaman, a first year student of Islamic Studies, Dhaka University and arrested him.

Asaduzzaman confessed that he and his accomplices had lured and kidnapped the boy, police said. He also gave a confessional statement before the CMM court.

Accomplices of the arrested youth released the kidnapped by near his residence at Purana Paltan yesterday at around 10:30 am, police said.

event is Tk 40 lakh, the organisers informed the press.

Earlier, when contacted over phone, the cultural secretary told this correspondent that the decision to replace the French "biennale" used for the first six events, with the English "biennial" was taken this year as the French spelling is "not to be found in any dictionary of the English language".

The unannounced change in appellation has undoubtedly caused some confusion among the participants as is evident from the country brochure of at least one country, namely India, handed to press at yesterday's conference.

In bold black italics, it announces "7th Asian Art Biennale 1995 Bangladesh."

National Blood Donation Day today

The National Blood Donation Day will be observed in the country today, report agencies.

Elaborate programmes have been taken to observe the day. The programmes include discussion, rally, walkathon and blood donation.

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) will organise a voluntary blood donation programme at the city's BA Siddique Red Crescent Nursing School premises today at 11 am.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia issued separate messages on the occasion.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia issued separate messages on the occasion.

PM: Letter

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created her (the PM) of creating the present political problems. A senior BNP leader, who attended the meeting, hinted that Begum Zia might again write to Sheikh Hasina.

Earlier, in the afternoon, the group of five eminent citizens trying for a dialogue between the two leaders met the PM at her Tejgaon office.

Talking to newsmen at the AL central office yesterday evening presidium member of the party Tofael Ahmed said, "We are pledge-bound not to disclose the content of Hasina's reply to the PM's letter. It's unethical and devoid of political nicety to make a personal letter public. We won't do what they (the BNP) have done."

Tofael further said all opposition political parties, despite their ideological differences, unanimously want a 1991-style caretaker government for holding the next general elections and the PM should understand the reality.

"We hope that the PM would realise the gravity of the on-going political stalemate and accept the concept of a caretaker government if she is sincere about a solution to the national problem," he said.

Ninian's proposals

From Page 1

eral for the resolution of a chronic political crisis gripping the country was accepted both by the government and the main opposition parties. An issue was the demand by the Opposition that the government should step down and that a 'neutral' caretaker government be established to oversee fresh elections.

The report continues: On the basis of his three-point proposal, the secretary general subsequently designated an envoy — Sir Ninian Stephen, former governor general of Australia — to facilitate a dialogue between the two sides.

It said, Sir Ninian spent five weeks in Bangladesh in October and November 1994, during which he put forward substantive proposals himself in an effort to break the deadlock. Although at the end of the mission his proposals remained on the table as a possible point of departure for an eventual political solution.

The political crisis in Bangladesh has continued and the Secretary General has persisted with his behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts to try to bring the two sides together, the report said.