

International

Heavy fighting kills 317 in Lanka

COLOMBO, Sept 4: Heavy fighting gripped Sri Lanka, killing at least 317 people as government forces mounted a fresh offensive to secure the northern town of Jaffna ahead of parliamentary polls, officials said today, reports AFP.

Thousands of army troops backed by aircraft cover advanced into territory held by the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) at Sarasala, Maduvi and Munavil in the peninsula on Sunday, the defence ministry said.

"Facing superior firepower from land and from air, the LTTE combat formations are putting up fierce resistance inflicting heavy casualties on the government troops," the LTTE statement said.

It did not give any numbers of rebel casualties, but said "several thousands of civilians" had fled to be hit by government artillery.

Defence ministry spokesman Karunaratne said intercepted radio transmissions of rebel communications indicated that at least 216 Tiger rebels were killed in the intense battles while more than 3000 were wounded.

The defence ministry said its initial reports suggested 71 soldiers were killed and another 479

were wounded, most of them with minor injuries. However, defence sources said 101 troops were killed.

The Tamil Tigers, in a statement issued by its London office, said they put up a stiff resistance to the military offensive and claimed to have killed more than 100 government troops.

"The military has also boosted its firepower with new MIG-27 combat aircraft and field guns ahead of an anticipated showdown with Tamil Tiger rebels ahead of the polls.

Defence sources here said the latest military offensive, which ended a lull in fighting since May, appeared to be aimed at pushing back rebel long-range guns that could have threatened the town of Jaffna in the run-up to the polls.

Security forces claimed to have halted a "rolling offensive" by the Tamil Tigers in May after the rebels overran the key Elephant Pass military garrison at the entrance to the peninsula in April.

However, the rebels still hold several areas of the peninsula, and official sources said there had been exchanges of long-range artillery and mortar bomb attacks in recent weeks.

The military has also boosted its firepower with new MIG-27 combat aircraft and field guns ahead of an anticipated showdown with Tamil Tiger rebels ahead of the polls.

The military has begun using the ground attack aircraft while the army deployed multi-barrel rocket launchers to neutralise rebel long-range guns which threatened the only military airfield in the region, officials said.

Security forces wrested Jaffna from rebel control in December 1995 after dismantling a de facto separate state there run by the guerrillas for nearly five years.

3 Pak nationals arrested with explosives in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Sept 4: Police in Nepal have arrested three Pakistani nationals carrying 35 kilos (77 pounds) of a highly explosive material known as RDX which was destined for India, police said Monday, report AFP.

The three were heading for India via Nepal but were detained Saturday night, the source said.

"After a tip-off, the Kathmandu District Police office arrested the three Pakistanis also with the explosives," it said.

Police got information the three had brought the RDX into Nepal and after an extensive search they were arrested at a hotel in Kathmandu along with the RDX.

"This is the biggest amount of RDX explosives confiscated in Nepal so far by police," the police source further said.

Police discovered the explosives were intended for terrorist attacks in India.

The last haul of RDX in Nepal, two years ago, totalled 19 kilos, also found at a hotel in Kathmandu.



Russian President Vladimir Putin (L) and his wife Lyudmila (L, background) meet Japanese Emperor Akihito (R) and Empress Michiko (2nd R) in front of the Emperor's palace yesterday. Putin arrived in Japan on three-day official visit. -AFP photo

BRIEFLY

21 killed in Pak bus plunge:

A speeding passenger bus went out of control near the eastern border city of Lahore and plunged into a roadside canal overnight, killing at least 21 people and injuring 30 others, police said Monday, AP reports from Lahore.

The bus careened off a narrow bridge while overtaking a truck 50 kilometres south of Lahore, they said. Police have found 21 bodies, but 14 others were missing and feared dead, they said.

Quake hits California:

A 5.2-magnitude earthquake hit the heart of Northern California's wine country early Sunday, injuring more than 25 people, knocking out windows, breaking gas and water mains, and shutting down power to about half of the county, police said, AP reports from Napa.

A 41-year-old man was in serious condition and a 5-year-old child was in critical condition after sustaining head injuries from falling objects, said Denise Mace spokeswoman at Queen of the Valley hospital in Napa. The quake hit at 1:36 am about 6 miles northwest of Napa, near the small town of Yountville.

Blast in Russian market kills 2:

An explosion tore through a market in the central Russian city of Ryazan today, killing two people and wounding four others, an emergency official said, AP reports from Moscow.

The blast tore apart a kiosk in the market at about 8:30 am (1000 BST) in the small industrial city about 200 kilometres south of Moscow, said Marina Rykina, spokeswoman with the Ministry of Emergency Situations. Authorities were investigating whether the explosion had resulted from a bomb or an industrial accident, she said.

Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka

Bakshi Bazar, Dhaka-1211

Tender Notice

Tender No. 675(3)

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from bona fide suppliers/firms for supply of 2 (two) duplicating machines of UK/Denmark/Japan origin for use at the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka.

Tender schedule will be available from Press Section, Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm on all working days up to 14.9.2000 on written application on their letterhead pad along with a non-refundable Bank Draft from any branch of Sonali Bank for Tk 200.00 (two hundred) only favouring Secretary, Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka.

All tenders must be accompanied by an earnest money of not less than 2.5% (two point five per cent) of tender amount with the offer and must be delivered in the form of Bank Draft from any branch of Sonali Bank only in favour of Secretary, Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Bakshi Bazar, Dhaka-1211.

The tender may be dropped as per tender schedule up to 1.00 pm of 18th September, 2000 in the tender box kept at the office of the undersigned and Board's Computer Centre, 12/A, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka. Tender may be accepted through Courier Service or Postal Service. The tenders will be opened on the same day at 2.00 pm in presence of the tenderers (if any) at the office of the undersigned.

Incomplete and conditional tender will not be considered. The Board authority reserves the right not to accept the lowest tender and reject any or all tenders wholly or partly without assigning any reason whatsoever and no claim shall be acceptable in this respect.

Secretary
Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka.

GD-821

Putin rejects Japanese sovereignty over Kurils

TOKYO, Sept 4: Russian President Vladimir Putin today rejected a Japanese call for sovereignty over four disputed islands, officials said, dashing hopes of a peace treaty this year, reports AFP.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshir Mori had proposed that Japan's borders be expanded to include the islands, known as the southern Kurils in Russia and Northern Territories in Japan, they said.

The Japanese idea is brave and well-considered but it does not correspond exactly with the Russian idea," Putin told Mori, according to a Japanese government official present at talks between the two leaders.

The islands were occupied by Soviet troops in the dying days of World War II, blocking the path to a peace treaty ever since.

The two sides agreed at a summit three years ago to forge a peace accord by the end of 2000 but progress has since been glacial because of the festering dispute.

Japanese rightist groups meanwhile drove through Tokyo's streets demanding the return of

the islands. In one convoy of about a dozen trucks, a loudspeaker blared repeatedly "Give them back."

Police set up roadblocks outside major government buildings.

"It is important to find a peace treaty by resolving the issue of the four islands," Mori told the Russian leader, who arrived here Sunday for a three-day visit.

Kunashiri (Kunashir in Russian), Etorofu (Iturup in Russian) Shikotan and the Habomai group of islets -- are home to about 16,000 people, according to Russian statistics.

Based on the idea of the islands being incorporated within Japanese territory, "we would like to see a peace treaty that is very acceptable to both sides," Mori said.

"I would like to insist on the idea that we will do our best to make it by the end of 2000."

Japan wants a Hong-Kong style handover under which Russia would cede sovereignty but keep administrative control of the islands during a phased return.

But the Russian president would not move.

Biman BANGLADESH AIRLINES

HEAD OFFICE, BALAKA, KURMITOLA, DHAKA-1229, BANGLADESH. CABLE: AIRBANGLA PABX: 8917400-20-LINES, FAX: 880-2-8913005, TELEX: 642649 DABG BJ

Tender Notice

Biman Bangladesh Airlines invites sealed tender for printing and supplying of Biman diary 2001 exclusively from the professional advertising firms, first class printing houses who have satisfactorily done a printing and publication work worth Taka 15 (fifteen) lacs and above under a single work order. Interested bidders must have their valid trade licence, VAT registration, income tax certificate duly updated. Detailed information has been incorporated in the tender schedule which can be bought from Cash and Banking Section, Biman Head Office, Balaka Bhaban, Kurmitola, Dhaka and Divisional Commissioner Office, Commissioner Building, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka on all working days till September 17, 2000 at a cost of Taka 1000 (one thousand) non-refundable per set.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their tender to Public Relations Department, Biman Head Office, Balaka, Dhaka latest by September 18, 2000 before 1200 hrs for opening the tender at 1430 hrs in the same day in presence of the bidders (if any).

Biman authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders in part or full without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Secretary
Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka.

GD-822

Public Relations Division



Former Lebanese prime minister Rafic Hariri kisses his wife Nazek at his home in Beirut yesterday. Hariri's office announced a landslide victory of his electoral list in Beirut in the second and final stage of parliamentary elections which could see Hariri return to office. -AFP photo

Hariri, Hezbollah sweep Lebanese polls

BEIRUT, Sept 4: Former Lebanese prime minister Rafic Hariri and his supporters took all 19 seats in the capital Beirut in voting Sunday, while the Syrian-backed alliance of the Hezbollah and Amal militias swept the south, press reports said today, reports AFP.

Hezbollah and Amal also took Baalbek and pro-Syrian candidates won in the eastern Bekaa valley, where the Syrian military presence is strong, the reports added, quoting unofficial results.

Hariri's success makes him favourite to resume the office which he quit in 1998 amid differences with newly-elected President Emile Lahoud, who has accused his administration of corruption.

Lahoud seemed to accept the situation late Sunday, when he said that his consultations with Parliament on the choice of the next prime minister would take place in line with the constitution.

With the defeat of Salim Hoss plus three of his ministers, it was the first time in modern Lebanese history that a serving prime minister was defeated at the polls.

In the south the alliance of Amal and Hezbollah, the Shiite militia groups which led the fight against the Israeli occupation, took all 23 seats, the press reported.

The alliance also won all nine seats in the Baalbeck constituency, while candidates approved by Syria were heading for victory with possibly one exception, at Zahle, where, where a different pro-Syrian candidate was tipped to win.

Official results of Sunday's polling, the second of two rounds, were expected to be announced later Monday.

Voting on August 27 covered the Metn region near Beirut, where Hariri allies also did well, and the north of the country.

Hariri won in the face of a vicious campaign by the state-run media, accusing him in the six years while he was prime minister of plunging the country into a bottomless economic crisis and running up debts that will total 25 billion dollars at the end of 2000.

Myanmar junta under fire for crackdown on Suu Kyi's party

YANGON, Sept 4: International pressure mounted on Myanmar's military government Monday as it kept up its crackdown on the leaders of Aung San Suu Kyi's opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), reports AFP.

World leaders and exiled opposition members today slammed the Yangon junta for detaining Aung San Suu Kyi and her chief lieutenants, after her nine-day standoff with the authorities ended on Saturday.

Armed guards were Monday

camped outside the NLD headquarters and NLD leaders' homes, preventing them from leaving and barring any visitors from visiting the detained NLD members.

"Smoking has a negative effect on the transfer of nutrients to the spinal column," said Rauschning. "The transfer is cut by half after only three hours of smoking," although tests show it recovers as soon as nicotine consumption ceases.

"Operation times are longer for smokers, they lose more blood and they need longer to recover from anaesthetics," said the surgeon. This applied to all operations and not just those carried out on the spinal column. "People who give up smoking a few months before an operation show better results," said Rauschning.

Clinton to make last attempt for ME peace

WASHINGTON, Sept 4: US President Bill Clinton will launch a final bid to rescue the Middle East peace process in separate talks with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Sunday for a three-day visit.

It is important to find a peace treaty by resolving the issue of the four islands," Mori told the Russian leader, who arrived here Sunday for a three-day visit.

The talks, to be held on the fringes of the UN Millennium Summit at the United Nations in New York, are likely to be tinged with pessimism, however.

They seek to bring an end to the half-century of conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and following on from the latest three-way talks at Camp David which ended in failure at the end of July.

For the US president, who leaves office at the end of January, a successful outcome to his Wednesday discussion with the two leaders is far from assured, despite a succession of trips by his advisors to the Middle East to prepare the ground for him as a decisive September 13 deadline looms.

Arafat has threatened to declare an independent Palestinian state after the deadline, although US and European pressure has led to indications Palestinian leaders may hold off the move for another few months.

Clinton prepared for the meeting with an impromptu stopover in Cairo last Tuesday on his return from a tour of Nigeria and Tanzania, for discussions with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Clinton's concern is to find a compromise angle in the key stumbling block to an accord: the status of East Jerusalem over which both Israel and the Palestinians claim sovereignty.

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