

BSF beefing up strength at several points

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian BSF is reinforcing its strength in several frontier areas including those in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon, Comilla and Feni districts, according to reports reaching here yesterday.

Since early morning yesterday, an artillery regiment was seen taking position at Sirpur on the Indian side opposite Choddagram in Comilla district, the reports said.

Heavy deployment of men and equipment on the Indian side was also reported from Chagalnayia in Feni.

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Terrorists severe tendons of Feni Juba Dal activist

UNB, Feni

Terrorists beat up a Juba Dal activist and severed tendons of his legs at Chandia Char in Sonagazi upazila here on Tuesday.

Masudul Haq, 20, came under attack by the gang when he was going to a local bazar from his house at about 8 am.

He was admitted to Sadar Hospital. Police said Masudul is an accused in 11 cases.

Local JCD blamed the BCL workers for the attack.

INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

For India there are only two neighbours, and Bangladesh is not one of them

MahfuzAnam

Focus 5

Need for settlement of outstanding issues

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 3		6.28 pm
May 4	5-22 am	

Prayer Timings		
May 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	4-55	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-30	6-35
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Hasina-Vajpayee talks ruled out 'for now'

Padua under adverse possession of India: FM

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has ruled out any summit-level meeting between Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Atal Behari Vajpayee during the former's trip to Brussels or at "any time soon".

However, officials of both countries will "meet at an early date" to resolve outstanding border problems, he added at his first press conference since the recent episode of border tension that began two weeks back.

The foreign minister termed the border situation "very quiet," and confirmed that both countries would make efforts to hold meetings soon to settle the unresolved border issues.

Samad Azad said there were several disputed territories within Bangladesh and India belonging to one country or the other, and that Padua is "under the adverse possession of India."

There are other adverse possessions, enclaves and matters of border demarcation that need to be settled immediately, and both Bangladesh and India have recently expressed their desire to do so "at the earliest," he said.

Last month's border skirmishes, the worst in three decades, left three Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and 16 Indian Border Security (BSF) personnel dead.

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West Bengal intellectuals for good ties with Dhaka

SAKYASEN MITTRA, Kolkata

Recent killing of 16 BSF personnel by BDR forces across the border of Mancachar in Assam has sent shockwaves through West Bengal. People of this state, however, believe that it was a stray incident and probably will not recur. In fact, they feel that the people from across the border are blood brothers and will remain so. People from all walks of life in the state are of the opinion that, somewhere down the line, administrative lapses on both the sides had led to the killings.

Following are excerpts of what some prominent personalities of West Bengal had to say on the incident:

Sunil Gangopadhyaya (litterateur): It is high time that we give Bangladeshis the credit that is their due. There have been too many occasions where we have adopted the "big brother" attitude. This has to stop. After all, they are an independent nation with a policy and mind of their own.

At the same time, I would also like to add that the killings were uncalled for. The border problems could have been easily solved across the table. To us, the matter is all the more painful because we share similar tastes and a language that is also

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Govt to resolve border conflict thru' dialogue

PM tells Cabinet colleagues

REAZ AHMAD

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has briefed her cabinet colleagues about the latest situation in the border and said that her government was determined to resolve the conflict through dialogue.

A detailed discussion on border situation took place at an impromptu meeting held at the Ganobhavan, prime minister's official residence, late night on Monday, ministers present at the meeting told the Daily Star yesterday.

The meeting, followed by a dinner hosted by the prime minister, took place on the heel of the historic verdict pronounced by a High Court bench upholding death sentence of 12 former army officers and acquitting three of the 15 sentenced to death by a trial court in the Bangabandhu murder case.

The ministers said that discussion on the verdict, border issue and

development works in different districts were on the agenda. The usual weekly meeting of the cabinet was held at the Prime Minister's Office earlier on the day.

One minister quoted the prime minister as saying that Bangladesh valued its friendly relations with all the neighbours including India and wanted to defuse the recent escalation of tension at some points on the Indo-Bangla border through dialogue.

Another minister said, the meeting observed that no casualties took place on the Padua frontier, but on the Roumari border BDR had opened fire in self-defence after coming under attack from the BSF.

"The bodies of the border guards were lying in the Bangladesh territory," said a minister, emphasising the fact that it was a clear case of intrusion from across the border.

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Two hurt as rivals clash over tender booty at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two young men were injured, one of whom critically, when rivals opened fire on them over a share of tender booty at Shahidullah Hall, Dhaka University, Tuesday night.

The injured were identified as Sayed and Pintu. Both were outsiders belonging to the AL-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and had been staying at room-2024 in the hall.

Sayed received four bullets, three of which hit his chest and one his back, while one bullet hit the right thigh of Pintu. He is son of a former police officer while Pintu is the younger brother of Sentu, popularly known as 'white' Sentu, a former BCL leader and notorious terrorist in the city.

Hailing from Barisal, both of them are members of BCL faction dominated by the students of Barisal and have been involved in various criminal activities on the university campus for long.

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The city experienced yet another afternoon of moderate to heavy shower yesterday. After a prolonged dry spell rain came as a refreshing relief.

Production of most paediatric medicines comes to halt

Lone bottle factory shut for two months

STAR REPORT

The country's pharmaceutical industry is passing through a critical time as the lone medicine bottle-making company has stopped production for the last two months.

The worst hit items are the paediatric medicines and almost all drugs for children which are manufactured in liquid form.

"Production of medicines for children at my factory has come down to nil," said AKM Shamsuddin, Managing Director of Rhone Poulenc. "Production of life saving drugs like antibiotics and paracetamol has also been hit."

The crisis started following a dispute between Bengal Glass, the

lone bottle factory, and the National Board of Revenue (NBR) over payment of value added tax (VAT).

Sources said, Bengal Glass had VAT credit against renovation programme of its factory. But NBR says the company cannot do this. As a result, NBR is now claiming around Tk 78 lakh from the company as VAT, which it had adjusted. NBR also stopped sale of bottles by the factory.

"NBR's action is illegal," said a director of Bengal Glass. "Under the rules, credit can be taken in account current against factory expansion work. We are now implementing an expansion programme and as such we are eligible for VAT credit."

But NBR Member (VAT) Fakrul

Abedin said the company is not entitled to VAT credit as it has gone for balancing, modernisation, rationalisation and expansion (BMRE).

Whatever may be the bone of contention, the industry is now paying the toll.

"Most factories have run dry on bottles," said SM Shafiuzzaman, President of Bangladesh Aushadh Shilpa Samity. "Some big factories are importing bottles from India. But many small industries are just buying used bottles from the market and reusing those. This is a dangerous practice as contaminated medicines can be fatal for children."



The Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Union brought out a huge procession in the city on Tuesday to mark the May Day.

Bangabandhu Murder Case Hearing on petitions for stay of execution of HC verdict today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The full bench of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will take up for hearing today two petitions seeking stay of execution of the High Court verdict on the Bangabandhu Murder Case which confirmed death sentence of 12 of the 15 accused.

The petitions were filed by lawyers of Maj (Rtd) Bazul Huda and Lt. Col (Rtd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, both sentenced to death.

Huda's petition was filed before the chamber judge of the Appellate Division Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury on Monday. Shahriar's petition was filed yesterday.

The Judge fixed May 3 (today) for hearing on both the petitions. Meanwhile Deputy Attorney General Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik filed a caveat petition before the Appellate Division yesterday praying that the state be informed about any petition filed by the defence lawyers and provided with a copy.

Justice Fazlul Karim, the third judge in Bangabandhu murder case gave the verdict on Monday after hearing the split judgement of the Death Reference Bench on six of the accused.

A trial court on November 8, 1998 sentenced all the 15 to death for killing the then President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his

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Vote AL for second term for self-reliant Bangladesh:PM

UNB, Ctg

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina here has urged the people to vote for Awami League for a second term and help establish an economically self-reliant Bangladesh.

"People always got something whenever they voted for Awami League They got independence in 1971 and gained food autarky in 1996," she said, adding "we will present a poverty-free Bangladesh if you vote for Awami League in the next election."

Hasina who was addressing a huge May Day rally at the Chittagong Outer Stadium on May 1 sought people's cooperation so that defeated forces of 1990 and '96 ousted in mass movements could not come to power.

Referring to the opposition's March 30 ultimatum and subsequent hartal, she said the opposition leader's movement has proved a failure as Awami League cannot be removed through movement.

Khaleda Zia has failed in running the country while in power and also failed in her movement from the opposition," the Prime Minister said and advised the opposition leader to take election preparations instead of making futile attempts to drag her out of power.

About the High Court's verdict against the condemned killers of Bangabandhu, Hasina alleged that Khaleda Zia wanted to protect the killers by enforcing hartal. She said the court's order for hanging the killers must be executed.

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3 policemen hurt in clash with drug traders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three policemen of Sabujbagh thana were hurt during a clash between police and drug traders at Titipara slum in the city Tuesday night.

Injured assistant sub-inspector Moinul Hossain, constables Bishwajit Sarker and Shadat Hossain were admitted to the Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital.

A team of six members of Sabujbagh thana went to the Titipara sweeper slum at about 8:30pm on Tuesday to arrest drug dealers, police said.

Sources, however, said that the police actually went to the slum to realise money from the drug dealers. As they refused to pay the large amount demanded by the police, both sides locked into an altercation and at one point the gang chased the police.

The gang hurled more than ten bombs at the police; in retaliation police fired six rounds of bullets to

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Ershad leaves for KSA today for 'treatment'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad is leaving for Saudi Arabia today.

He may also visit Dubai of United Arab Emirates (UAE). He may stay in the two countries for a couple of weeks, sources said.

Ershad told The Daily Star yesterday that he was going to Saudi Arabia for treatment and he would return home as per his doctor's advice.

Political circles however claimed that he was going abroad mainly to collect funds for the coming election. Ershad has an account with the United Bank in UAE, they claimed.

However, Ershad dismisses the allegation, saying "It's all lie."

In recent days, Ershad had been trying for merger of Jatiya Party factions led by him and Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Monju. "The process is

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