

PM asks army not to harass innocents

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday asked army commanders to perform their duties neutrally in arresting criminals and recovering illegal arms during the ongoing crackdown on crimes.

Presiding over a meeting of the Army Formation Commanders at the Army Headquarters, the prime minister, who is also in charge of the Defence Ministry, urged them to be careful so that innocent people are not subjected to harassment.

Saying that peace will have to be maintained for public security and normal livelihood, the prime minister advised the army top brass to exercise more caution so that no unfortunate incident takes place during the countrywide joint drives.

"The success and progress in the joint operation that you achieved along with members of police, BDR and Ansar has already earned praise of all," she told the commanders.

She urged them to convey her thanks to army officers and soldiers of all ranks in the force.

The prime minister reminded them that army personnel had been deployed at different times in the past to help the civil administration and that they performed their responsibilities properly.

"You will also maintain the tradition in the ongoing joint operation," she told the formation commanders as the mopping up operation against criminals continued for over a fortnight.

Khaleda made a mention of the worldwide acclamation the Bangladesh Army personnel earned through performing their duties dexterously in UN Peacekeeping Missions. "You will have to uphold the praise you earned at home and abroad."

Various activities of army were discussed in the meeting. The army commanders apprised the prime minister of the progress in curbing crime and recovering unauthorised arms during the current joint operation launched on October 16 midnight.

Before the meeting, Army Chief Lt General Hasan Mashud Chowdhury welcomed the PM and gave his introductory speech.

PM's Political Secretary Mohammad Mosaddek Ali, Principal Staff Officer Maj Gen AM Mahmuduzzaman and other high army officials were present.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia chairs a meeting with the formation commanders at the Army Headquarters in the city yesterday.

Hartal today Talukder Khaleque sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna city Awami League will enforce a half-day hartal today protesting the arrest of former state minister Talukder Abdul Khaleque MP.

He was arrested by army from his Munshipara residence in the city Friday afternoon.

Talukder Abdul Khaleque, also general secretary of Khulna city Awami League, has been shown arrested under Section 54 of CrPc.

He was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM's) Court, Khulna, yesterday. The court rejected Khaleque's bail petition and sent him to the district jail.

A large number of party leaders and workers chanted slogans outside the court demanding release of Khaleque.

Supreme Court stays Saber's bail order

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed the High Court order that granted ad interim bail to AL leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury in the case of attack on motorcade of Khaleda Zia at Savarin in June last year.

Chamber Judge of the appellate division Syed IR Modassir Hossain passed the stay order for one week on a petition by the government.

The judge asked the government to submit regular leave to appeal petition setting November 9 for SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 3	5:00	5:18 pm
Nov 4	6:06 am	

Prayer Timings		
Nov 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:00	5:25
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	3:50	4:05
Maghrib	5:26	5:32
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Deaths with many questions

STAR REPORT

While the army claims that 16 people have died either due to 'heart attack' or while escaping arrest in 15 days of the Operation Clean Heart, witnesses and their family members have invariably alleged that they were beaten or tortured to death.

Fourteen out of the 16 did not even have any case against them, while of the remaining two one was free on bail and the other had a case against him.

While their deaths have been put down to heart failure, autopsies were conducted amid tight security by police and army personnel. Unnatural Death (UD) cases have been filed against each of the deaths.

Witnesses and family members of the victims have alleged that all the deaths were caused by torture during interrogation and all the bodies bore visible marks of injuries.

Similarly, some of the doctors who conducted the autopsies said on condition of anonymity have said that torture, and not heart attack, caused these deaths.

On the first night of the army swoop on October 17, the army detained Uttara thana BNP Organisation Secretary Yakub Ali, Pallabi thana Jubo League worker Jahangir and some others. Both of them died the next day.

On October 19, autopsies on the two bodies were conducted in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital amid tight security by the police and the army. The body of Yakub was handed over to his brother Ismail at 11:00pm, which was transported to his residence by a police vehicle.

Yakub's youngest brother Haji Akbar Ali told journalists that his brother allegedly died from army torture. He added that a certain army officer with whom he had a

dispute over a land might have targeted Yakub. Yakub did not face any criminal charges.

In the UD case filed with the Uttara Police Station, it has been claimed that Yakub died of heart attack. Later, Home Secretary Mohammad Omar Faruk made similar claims saying that the government had the death certificate as proof.

When asked, Yakub's wife Hosne Ara told journalists, "The army tied us all and started beating up Yakub in front of all of us."

The home secretary made similar comments about Jahangir.

But Jahangir's uncle Advocate Mohammad Shahidullah told reporters that immediately after arresting him, the army blindfolded and tied Jahangir at his residence and beat him up severely.

After his death, a general diary SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Colombo, LTTE agree on military de-escalation

AFP, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand

Sri Lanka's warring parties meeting at a Thai resort made a breakthrough yesterday on three key deals, clearing the way for military de-escalation in the embattled nation, negotiators said.

Sri Lanka's chief negotiator, GL Peiris, said the government and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) agreed during their third day of peace talks to set up a high-powered panel to address military issues.

"We are giving highest importance to this committee and on our side we will be nominating our defence secretary Austin Fernando to head it," Peiris told reporters. "I am mentioning this to reflect the seriousness with which the Sri Lankan government is approaching this issue."

The panel is to undertake a process of military de-escalation in embattled areas and ensure problems of implementing a Norwegian-arranged truce are addressed without allowing unrest to degenerate into violence, officials said.

Peiris said despite the Oslo-brokered truce in place since February 23, tension continued to brew between government forces and the LTTE over the implementation of the ceasefire.

Truce monitors reported violations by both sides but said the breaks were not serious enough to jeopardise the entire peace process, aimed at ending three decades of ethnic bloodshed that has claimed over 60,000 lives.

Peiris, also the Colombo government's constitutional affairs minister, said the joint panel was to be the first top-level military panel set up to address problems before they snowballed.

The military panel, also likely to include a member nominated by peace brokers, is to address the dismantling of military camps established on land taken from civilians or public institutions.

It will also tackle de-mining in the island's northern and eastern regions, to allow hundreds of thousands of refugees to return to their homes.

Sources close to the talks said the joint military panel, the first of its kind in the embattled nation, was to meet within a week, likely at Omani in Sri Lanka's northern province.

It will also seek to defuse tension between the minority Muslims and the LTTE.

Peiris said the four-day peace talks, which opened Thursday, had made more progress than was thought possible. Details were to be officially announced at the end of the talks Sunday.



An army personnel helps local traders put up a banner that says 'Fulbaria free from crime and violence' at the Fulbaria bus terminal in the city yesterday.

Crackdown on racketeers at city terminals, hospital

29 held while 'trying to go to India without documents': Bogra BNP leader, Comilla Jamaat leader nabbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army arrested more than 3700 people and recovered at least 542 firearms along with 13908 rounds of ammunition till yesterday morning during the countrywide anti-crime "Operation Clean Heart" that began on October 17.

Of the arrested, 2512 are listed criminals and the rest non-listed criminals and suspects.

During the 24 hours ending at

8:00 am yesterday, troops arrested 187 people including 29 listed and 153 non-listed criminals and five suspects across the country.

Of them, 42 were arrested from different areas of the city. They included 29 Hindus from a bus at Siddiq Bazar on charge of trying to go to India without required documents.

Army teams also raided Fulbaria and Gabtali bus terminals and drove away racketeers from the Pangu

Hospital in another raid.

Our Chittagong Correspondent said army raided the house of the general secretary of Chittagong city BNP and arrested three notorious criminals from there.

An army team raided the Kadamtali residence of Golam Dastagir Chowdhury at 3:00 pm, searched it for four hours and arrested Mosharraf Hossain, Giasuddin and Abul Kalam.

According to police, all the

arrestees have been accused in a number of cases including murder. The BNP leader was not home during the raid. Dastagir's residence was searched twice last week.

Army also nabbed Dr Kamrul Hayat Khan, a BNP leader and brother of Mokammel Hayat Khan Muki, the main accused in BUET student Sabeque Nahar Sony murder case.

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Jail Killing Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jail Killing Day today is observed across the country today in remembrance of the four national leaders killed inside the Dhaka Central Jail on this day 27 years ago.

The Awami League (AL) and its front organisations have chalked out various programmes to pay homage to the slain leaders.

Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Qamruzzaman and Captain M Mansur Ali were gunned down by the army on November 3, 1975. They were close associates of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In observance of the day, the AL will hoist the national and party flags at half-mast and put up black flags at party offices in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country. Leaders and workers are to wear black badges to mourn the killings.

The day's programmes also include garlanding the portrait of Bangabandhu, placing wreaths at the graves of the national leaders at SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

After army, what's next? Hasina sees uncertainty in future

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed concern over the nation's future and wondered what might be in store for the country after the army is withdrawn.

"Failing to curb crime, you (prime minister) have called out the army. But what is next?" she said while talking to newsmen at Zia International Airport here on her return from a 10-day visit to UK, Belgium and USA.

Hasina alleged that the prime minister had called in the army chief at her office and handed over a list to him compelling the army to arrest people as per the list.

She also alleged that the criminals arrested by the army were being released on the basis of the list supplied by BNP. "But if the real criminals are not tried, how will crime end?" she asked.

The Awami League president said human rights are being violated, but real criminals are not being arrested,

adding that not a single Jamaat-Shibir armed cadre has yet been nabbed. "This raises question about the neutrality of the army's anticrime drive," she said.

Hasina said the alliance government has established a "reign of terror", as well as damaged the image of the armed forces. She said her party wants the army to arrest the real criminals without following any list supplied by any quarter.

"Many BNP ministers and MPs, involved in killing and other crimes, have not been arrested yet while people like Sheikh (Fazul Karim) Selim and Saber Hossain (Chowdhury) were arrested," she said, asking whether they (Selim and Saber) are criminals.

The former prime minister said the BNP-Jamaat government does not want a healthy democratic dispensation to exist in the country. The government, she said, has violated the constitution and human rights by calling out the army after failing to control crime.

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Detention under SPA: HC asks govt to explain

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court dealing with more than 150 writ petitions challenging detention under the Special Powers Act yesterday issued identical rule upon the government to show cause why such detention should not be declared illegal.

Justice Mohammad Abdul Aziz and Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury of a division bench issued the rule for 'speedy dispensation of justice', court sources said.

The rule was made returnable in one week for those petitioners detained in Dhaka, Manikganj, Gazipur and Narayanganj districts while two weeks for petitioners in other districts.

Mild tremor jolts Ctg

UNB, Dhaka

A mild earthquake measuring 4.41 in the Richter scale shook the port city of Chittagong in the early hours of yesterday.

However, there was no immediate report of any casualties or damages.

A Met office press release here yesterday said the tremor struck at about 2:08am and lasted for about 24 seconds. The epicenter of the quake was 225 kms off the port city.

Some seven earthquakes shook SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

No ADB deadline to export gas: Chino

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Tadao Chino yesterday denied the ADB setting any deadline for deciding on gas export and said it is a decision that entirely rests with the Bangladesh government.

"I haven't given any such deadline. We are only interested in the commercial viability of the proposed western region gas pipeline

project," Chino told a press conference in the city prior to his departure yesterday morning. However, after meeting the ADB chief on Thursday at his hotel suite, State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain told waiting reporters that the Bank expects a decision on gas export by November as it feels that export would make the western pipeline project viable.

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