

27 Israeli reserve pilots refuse to bomb Palestinians

NEW YORK TIMES, Jerusalem

Twenty-seven reserve pilots in the Israeli Air Force presented a signed petition Wednesday saying that they would not take part in "illegal and immoral" strikes in Palestinian areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The airstrikes, aimed at Hamas militants, sometimes kill Palestinian civilians.

"We refuse to participate in air force attacks on civilian populations," said the letter, which was sent to the head of the air force, Maj. Gen. Dan Halutz. "We refuse to continue harming innocent civilians."

The petition is similar to a letter signed by hundreds of reserve soldiers who have pledged not to serve in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Most of the pilots who signed the petition have not been on active duty in recent years, the air force said. It was not clear whether any had been involved in the strikes.

Israel calls the strikes "targeted killings." They have broad support among Israelis, with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government saying they are the most effective way to attack terrorists who hide among civilians.

The Israeli news media said one of the petition's signers was Yiftach Spector, a brigadier general in the reserves, who took part in the bombing of the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq in 1981.

In a sharp response to the pilots' letter, General Halutz said members of the military should not take political positions. "We do not choose our wars or missions," he said on Israeli television.

"We will continue to hunt terrorists," he said, adding, "We have no intention of harming civilians."

One recent Israeli target, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, emerged Wednesday for the first time since he was lightly wounded on September 6 in the bombing of a Gaza City apartment where he was meeting with Hamas members.

In a news conference at a Gaza City mosque, the defiant

Woman rescued 11 days after 'abduction'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sabujbagh police rescued a Bangladeshi-born American young woman 11 days after she was believed to have been abducted and held three suspected abductors at Chulhati in Keraniganj yesterday.

Police rescued Fahmdia Alam Lucky from a house at noon and arrested Ashraful Alam Monir, Mintu and Hakim for their alleged involvement in the crime.

Earlier, Lucky's father filed a general diary with Sabujbagh Police Station accusing the arrestees.

A gang kidnapped her on September 15 from the Chulhati intersection in Keraniganj while she was going to a relative's house, police said.

However, another source claimed that Lucky had an affair with Monir and left with him willingly as her parents were against their relationship.

A case was filed with Keraniganj Police Station.

9 criminals held with arms cache

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Nalchhiti police arrested nine alleged criminals of notorious Azim Bahini with arms and ammunition in Jhalakathi in last two days.

Tipped off, police raided the gang's hideout in Kumarkhali fish project area Wednesday night while they were preparing for a robbery. After a gunfight, police held Azim's brother Masud, Milon Khalifa, Asif Chowdhury, Salam, Jahangir, Jamal and Shohag. However, gang leader Azim fled, sources said.

The sources added police recovered one single breach-loaded (SBL) gun, one light gun, seven bullets, 12 hand made bombs, huge bomb-making materials and sharp weapons from the spot.

Upon information from the arrestees, police raided another hideout of the gang at Naruttampur yesterday morning and nabbed Badal and Anwar with one SBL gun, police said.

The gang members are wanted in many criminal cases with various local police stations, police added. The Jhalakathi Magistrate's Court sent the criminals to jail after police produced them before the court yesterday.

AL activist chopped to death in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An Awami League activist was chopped to death by BNP cadres at village Barogangdia in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia on Wednesday night.

The victim was identified as Akram Hossain .35, son of Jabbar Hossain of the village.

According to police and witnesses, BNP cadres Mukul, Rabi, Kadar, Keramat, Billal and Hossain chopped Akram with sharp weapons while he was returning home from a bazar at around 9:30pm. Akram succumbed to his injuries on way to local health center.

A case was filed with Daulatpur Police Station yesterday morning, accusing the BNP cadres. Police could not arrest any of the killers till yesterday evening.

In another incident, a housewife was beaten to death by her husband for dowry at village Shibrampur in Kumarkhali upazila the same night.

Police and locals said Mafizuddin, son of Sadaruddin of the village, beat his wife Fuljan Khatun as she refused to bring money in dowry from her parents. Fuljan died on the spot.

Police recovered the body yesterday morning and sent it to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

Mofiz had gone into hiding immediately after the incident. A case was filed with Kumarkhali Police Station.

Hasina's birthday on Sunday

UNB, Dhaka

The 56th birth anniversary of Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina will be celebrated on Sunday.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has chaked out various programmes on the occasion.

BCL leaders and workers will exchange greetings with AL chief at her residence at Sudhasadan in the morning. It will also bring out a jubilant procession at 11am on the Dhaka University campus and hold a Milad-Mahfil at its office after Asr prayers, said a press release.

Road mishaps

FROM PAGE 1
died on the spot. The deceased are Malek, 28, owner of the shanty, Salma, 28, Sonia, 7, and an unidentified female, 35.

Of the injured, Habibul, 45, Shawon, 5, Shahinur, 32, Amirul, 50, Shahidul, 50, and Nannu Mia were rushed to Sonargaon Health Complex and Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police lifted the bus from the ditch in the evening.

In Chittagong, three people were run over and killed by a speeding bus at Oxygen Crossing at about 7.00am, according to UNB.

The dead were identified as Sachin Pandey, 32, Prasanta Pandey, 22, and Kabita Pal, 23, workers of KDS Garments. Police seized the bus and arrested its driver Abul Khair Raju.

Immediately after the accident, angry workers came out of the garments factory and put up a barricade on the road, disrupting traffic for an hour. Later, police removed the barricade.

Durga Puja

FROM PAGE 1
State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafrul Islam Chowdhury's constituency Chittagong-15 will get 20 tonnes.

Other constituencies, which have been allocated 25 tonnes each, are Netrokona-1, Narsingdi-4, Gazipur-3, Laxmipur-3, Laxmipur-2, Noakhali-2, Noakhali-1, Comilla-10, Kushtia-4 and Bhola-4, all belong to the BNP lawmakers.

Only Noakhali-4, which belongs to independent lawmaker Mohammad Ali, has got an allocation of 25 tonnes.

The ministry asked the deputy commissioners (DCs) of the districts to keep in touch with the ministers and lawmakers of the constituencies, though the sanction was made against the DCs.

LDCs

FROM PAGE 12
Cancun meet has both its positives and negatives, depending on the perspective one takes.

On the positive side, the meeting demonstrated that the developing and least developed countries (LDCs) have mustered maturity to be assertive and lead the negotiations to the climax of stalemate.

"The developed countries were ambushed as they did not expect such a broad-based coalition of the developing countries (G21) and LDCs to emerge in the course of the Ministerial," the executive director of the think tank Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) said in an interview with The Daily Star.

However, the developed countries were not equally responsive to the demands of the LDCs and developing nations who were clear in articulating their priorities.

On the negative side, he said, while struggling for incremental agenda, the minimum achievements made in Geneva and Cancun have been lost. Given the emerging uncertainties, it is not sure whether the developed nations are going to renege on their own proposals and rollback their offers which were made in Cancun.

(See Details on Page-18)

Putin criticises US on Iraq

AP, United Nations

Russian President Vladimir Putin implicitly criticised the United States on Thursday for launching a war on Iraq without UN approval and demanded "direct participation" by the United Nations in rebuilding the country.

As the world body tries to grapple with the violence and instability in post-war Iraq, Russia, France, Germany and other opponents of the US-led war have been pressing for a timetable for the United States to hand over power to Iraqis and a much greater role for the United Nations in overseeing the political transition.

Putin did not mention a timetable in his speech on the third day of the General Assembly's annual ministerial meeting, focusing instead on the demand for UN action on many problems facing the world today -- including Iraq -- and stressing that the world body is "clearly irreplaceable."

"This is made abundantly clear by the following important fact. Despite sharp differences about how to resolve the Iraq crisis, the situation ultimately is coming back to the legal sphere of the United Nations," Putin said.

"The position of Russia here is consistent and clear. Only direct participation by the United Nations in the rebuilding of Iraq will enable its people themselves to decide on their future," he said. "And only with the active -- and I want to stress this -- practical assistance by the United Nations in its economic and civil transformation, only thus will Iraq assume a new worthy place in the world community."

Other world leaders also criticised Washington for harming the United Nations with its unilateralist approach in Iraq, while some thanked the world body for its role in healing conflict in their lands.

Cyprus President Tassos

Papadopolous, the opening speaker on Thursday, said the United Nations should persevere in trying to resolve the dispute on the island between the Greek and Turkish sides.

"We understand and share the bitterness and the disappointment of all involved for the failure but as I said before we should not give up," he said.

He blamed the Turkish-Cypriot leaders for the failure, but hoped they would return to the negotiating table.

In speeches to the General Assembly Wednesday, foreign leaders again threw barbs at President Bush's policy of "pre-emptive" military strikes and demanded that conflicts and global threats be resolved collectively.

Slain woman at Dhanmondi was clinic attendant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The woman who was gunned down at Dhanmondi Wednesday night worked as an attendant at a clinic.

Monwara Begum was identified by her son-in-law Almas Uddin at Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night. She lived at 1/1, Basila, Mohammadpur with her husband Babul Mia.

Almas told police that Monwara worked at Mollika Clinic at Dhanmondi. He, however, did not know who the killers might be, police said.

Unidentified assailants sprayed bullets on the 40-year-old woman at the west end of Road number 19 (old), Dhanmondi at around 10:00 Wednesday night. She died at the DMCH.

Bangladesh.

The speaker said, "We could cancel the conference after coming to power as the move was taken by the past government. We have not done so, thinking of our country's image."

He said he invited Hasina in a letter to attend the launch of the conference and speak on October 7, pointing out that her and her party's presence at other sessions and close of the meet would make the big event successful.

Sircar said, "I don't understand why the opposition won't join the conference although their all demands have been met without delay. I hope all misunderstandings, if any, will be resolved and they (AL) will join the conference."

The speaker's written speech at the press conference shows a delay, though.

Sircar said Abdul Hamid, the deputy leader of the opposition, wrote to him first on August 11, demanding an increase in the AL representation to the steering committee. Nineteen days later in a second letter on August 30, Hamid asked why the two political secretaries to the prime minister were included on the committee.

The speaker claimed to have assured the opposition of increasing the number of members of different committees.

Asked about the delay of one and a half months in meeting the opposition demands, the speaker said he did not make any delay.

Sircar referred to a letter to the deputy leader of the opposition on September 20 and said he had explained the logic behind the inclusion of two non-MPs -- Haris Chowdhury and Mosaddak Ali -- on the steering committee.

The speaker also said he wrote to Hasina on August 25, seeking her opinions on the conference and requested her to nominate party deputies for different committees.

Judiciary

FROM PAGE 1
the court's Section Office, as it was a weekly holiday of the court.

Court sources said hearing of the petition before the full bench of the Appellate Division is likely to take place on Sunday, a day after the opposition-called hartal.

The government filed a petition seeking modification of the draft on separation of the judiciary in April. The court rejected the prayer on May 26, saying finalisation or implementation did not require any policy decision of the government.

However, there has so far been hardly any follow-up to the decision. Only one meeting of the cabinet committee on separation of the judiciary took place on September 4 and it did not push the issue further.

The BNP-led four-party coalition has already been given extension on four occasions. Previously, the caretaker administration was given three extensions in as many months and the Awami League government seven.

The 12-point directive was issued in December 1999.

Clashes mark Feni Poura polls

UNB, Feni

Elections to the eight seats of ward commissioner in Feni Pourasava were held yesterday amid clashes between activists of the ruling coalition.

Witnesses said Jamaat-Shibir and Chhatra-Jubo Dal activists clashed after a magistrate fined a Jamaat-backed commissioner candidate, Safulla, Tk 10,000 on charge of influencing the voters at a polling centre.

At least 15 people were injured at Feni Government Girls High School Centre as police and BDR clubbed the rioting supporters.

Besides, chase and counter-chase took place at other centers in seven wards over attempts to take control of the polling centers and rig vote.

Those declared elected commissioners are Moazzem Hossain Hazari Boku, Abdur Rab, Gazi Abdul Malek, Delwar Hossain Babul, Kamaluddin Mahamud, Ataul Haq Ashru, Omar Farooq Betal and Jasimuddin.

Seaport

FROM PAGE 12
experts from home and abroad will conduct the necessary research to select probable locations. Experts will be appointed after evaluating their track records in this specialised field.

The committee in its preliminary report has however bracketed the western side of the Sonadia Island and the Akram Point, about 60km down the Mongla Port in Khulna, for the port.

The committee, which also examined such previous study reports, also felt other areas should be examined thoroughly.

Though the initiative for a deep seaport was taken during the Awami League government, no progress was achieved until March this year.

The committee was formed following a decision at a meeting chaired by Dr Kamal Uddin Siddique, principal secretary to the prime minister.

Free trade

FROM PAGE 12
arguments on water issues with India."

Chowdhury parried questions about Bangladesh's ownership of South Talpatty as well as Dhaka's plan to buy about 200 anti-tank missiles from Islamabad.

"It's an affair of the Bangladesh Navy," he said when a correspondent asked for his comment on the decision of the parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry to ensure the country's sovereignty on South Talpatty.

When a reporter asked him to confirm a report that Bangladesh is planning to buy about 200 anti-tank missiles from Pakistan, the foreign secretary said, "It's an affair of the defence ministry."

Asked to explain the "significance" of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit, the foreign secretary said the summit is important on any count. Because of the changed situation after 9/11, the OIC has a new collective responsibility for projecting Islam in its correct perspective.

About responses from the OIC member states about Bangladesh's candidature for the post of OIC secretary general, he said, "By and large the response has been positive."

Hartal

FROM PAGE 12
tomorrow's September 25 hartal as the day coincided with the Shab-e-Meraj.

The AL called the hartal to protest price hike of essentials, 'corruption' by the prime minister and her family members, closure of mills and factories, retrenchment of workers, 'politicisation' of the administration and key sectors, killing of AL leaders and workers by the 'ruling party men' and lack of security of people under the present rulers.

Meanwhile, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday urged party leaders and activists to make tomorrow's hartal a success.

Addressing an extended meeting of the city AL, Jalil said the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government's misrule has made people's life miserable and they now want to get rid of it.

He asked the AL leaders and workers to mobilise people for a massive anti-government movement. People will express no-confidence in the present government by observing tomorrow's hartal, he hoped.

Leaders of different thana and ward units of the city AL attended the meeting held at the party central office at the Bangabandhu Avenue.

Meanwhile, Awami Shechcha Sebak League, volunteers' wing of the AL, holds a rally today at Muktangan in support of tomorrow's hartal. Later, it will bring out a procession.

Iraqi councillor dies

FROM PAGE 12
family, her colleagues on the Governing Council and the people of Iraq," L. Paul Bremer, the top American civilian official in Iraq, said in a statement.

Al-Hashimi, who was not married and thought to have been in her mid-40s, had been cared for a US military hospital in the compound at Saddam Hussein's former Republican Palace in central Baghdad where the US-led coalition has its headquarters.

Al-Hashimi, a career diplomat and Shiite Muslim, had been expected to become Iraq's new ambassador to the United Nations. She served in the Foreign Ministry during the Saddam government and was the only official of the ousted regime appointed to the 25-member Governing Council.

The Governing Council president, Ahmad Chalabi, blamed remnants of the Saddam regime, ousted by US-led forces in April.

Chalabi attended the Security Council along with Adnan Pachachi, the elder statesman on the council and a former foreign minister in a government before Saddam Hussein seized power.

Al-Hashimi was a controversial choice for the council. She has served as a key aide to former Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and often traveled abroad with him as he represented Saddam's government.

Al-Hashimi ran the oil-for-food program in the Foreign Ministry under which the United Nations allowed Iraq to exchange oil earnings for humanitarian goods.

She had a degree in law and a

Outlaws kill 2 in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Two people were hacked to death allegedly by outlaws yesterday in separate incidents in Pabna.

Baki Billah of Satgram village at Ekdantapur union under Atgharia upazila was called out of his residence at midnight and taken to a nearby farm land by a gang of 12, locals said.

Police found Billah dead the following morning. Billah, also a member of an outlawed party, was wanted in several criminal cases, police said.

In the other incident, unidentified assailants killed Arap Ali at Idulpur Bazar in Chhatmahor upazila.

Witnesses said a gang of 10 in masks attacked Ali in the busy market. Having failed to escape, he sought for help in vain and was killed on the spot.

Two separate cases were filed in connection with the murders.

GP pre-paid

FROM PAGE 12
The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has approved the GP's new tariff reduction plan, sources said.

Earlier, the GP reduced call charges for post-paid users to Tk 4.00 per minute from Tk 6.00. It also reduced inter-zonal call charges to Tk 7-8 per minute from Tk 15-16.

Moreover, it reduced subscription charges for its regular subscribers of ISD (international subscribers dialling) facility to Tk 17,750 from Tk 36,500.

Meanwhile, the GP signed a contract with Swedish telecom equipment vendor Ericsson early last month to upgrade its pre-paid platform and another to improve its technical standard.

PCJSS

FROM PAGE 1
dent was a political demand and the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts did not expect such a 'bizarre' statement from a top government official.

The organisation said his remarks stemmed from an 'extremely communal, irresponsible and biased' mindset.

The PCJSS questioned the logic of dismissing the involvement of any government agency in the Mahalchhari incidents without any inquiry.

Referring to the statements of the victims, the organisation alleged that the army, civil and police administration played a 'deplorable role' during the attacks on the houses of the hills people.

The local administration and police stood by and army men were present when Banlajee settlers attacked the villages of indigenous people, the PCJSS alleged.

Press reports say Bangalee settlers attacked nine villages in Mahalchhari upazila in Khagrachhari district on August 26, looting and burning 400 houses and leaving 2,000 people homeless.

Eight Marines

FROM PAGE 12
series aimed at Western targets in Iraq. Also Thursday, a bomb at a Baghdad hotel used by a US television network killed a Somali security guard.

An Iraqi security official died in an attack on the United Nations compound in the capital on Monday and on Wednesday a roadside bomb intended for a US convoy hit two civilian buses, killing one Iraqi.

Guerrilla attacks have killed 79 US soldiers in Iraq since Washington declared major combat over on May 1. Many more have been wounded.

doctorate in French literature and viewed herself as a women's rights advocate. Her last role at the ministry was as director of international relations.

US-led forces have been struggling to put down a guerrilla-style insurgency that has targeted Americans and their Iraqi allies. The police chief of the central town of Khaldiyyah, who was working with US forces, was assassinated by gunmen last week, and other attacks have killed police recruits trained by the Americans.

Last month, Ayatollah Moham-med Bagir al-Hakim, a top Shiite cleric who leads a movement with a seat on the Governing Council, was killed in a car bombing that left at least 85 people dead. Al-Hakim's brother, Abdel-Aziz, is a council member.

The council was established by the US-led coalition in mid-July to put an Iraqi face on the process of rebuilding the country.

DU to give Tk 3 lakh to family of accident victim

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) has decided to give Tk 3 lakh as compensation to the family of Sagar, who died Tuesday night following a road accident.

Authorities also decided to put more speed-bumps on the campus roads and are considering to remove the filling station from the Chankhar Pool intersection. The security booths on the campus will be raised to seven from five and the number of security men to 45 from 15.

The decisions were taken at a syndicate meeting Wednesday.

Mohammad Rafiqul Islam Sagar, a third-year student of applied chemistry died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital Tuesday night three days after he was sandwiched between two buses at Chankhar Pool Sunday night.

Authorities have also decided to permanently ban heavy vehicles on the campus roads and asked the home ministry to take necessary measures.

Students at a sit-in on the campus Wednesday gave authorities a 72-hour ultimatum to meet their six-point demand which are Tk 5 lakh as compensation to the victim's family, removal of the petrol pump at Chankhar Pool, imposition of restriction on heavy vehicles on the campus roads, setting up of more speed-bumps on the campus, punishment to the bus driver and more vigil at all the entry points of the university.

They also submitted memorandum to DU Vice-chancellor Prof. SMA Faiz the same day, demanding immediate implementation of their six-point demand.

Following the death of Sagar, hundreds of students staged demonstrations on the campus and locked in pitched battles with police, who clubbed and teargassed the agitated students, leaving at least five injured.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Chhtrala League, student wing of the opposition Awami League, has condoled the death of Sagar.

ADB

FROM PAGE 12
through surveys of a cross section of secured financing institutions, as well as training and capacity building. In the second phase, the TA will help to establish an independent anti-corruption commission and assist the government in formulating a credible anti-corruption strategy for private and public sectors, it added.

This fund will also support good governance initiatives in the secured financing sector of private credit markets including property collateral for equipment, vehicles, shares, softwares and other non-land property, it said.

A national committee on prevention of corruption will be convened to examine laws, rules and regulations and enable cross-verification by investigative and regulatory agencies to check government corruption. It will also incorporate mechanism to seek feedback from civil society and other stakeholders on the committee's output, the ADB added.

The \$11.87,500 project will end by May 2004. The ADB is providing \$7,00,000, the Canadian government will administer \$2,50,000 to the fund while the government will provide the rest.

Indian HC

FROM PAGE 1
court to direct the Indian government, Delhi administration and police to detect and deport them.

Delhi police, however, explained to the court through an affidavit the difficulties they have been facing in identifying the Bangladeshis, most of whom are residing in Jangpura, Seelampur, Juma Masjid, Nizmuddin, Sadiq Nagar, Ansari Nagar and some other localities of Delhi.