

China strike two golds

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bulleye to deprive Russia's Lioubov Galkina of victory with the last shot in the women's 10-metre air rifle final.

"It's an unbelievable feeling to win gold," Du said.

Within four hours, Wang Yifu produced a similarly nerveless performance to strike gold in the men's 10m Air Pistol event.

Despite winning gold at the 1992 Olympics, Wang had earned the reputation as a serial choker after twice being pipped for first place in the 1996 and 2000 Games.

But the veteran Chinese shooter was not to be denied for a third time, scoring high with his last shot to finish with a total of 690 points, fractionally ahead of Mikhail Nestruev as Russia were again left with the silver medal.

China therefore made the perfect start in their quest to repeat their performance of the 2000 Sydney Olympics when they finished third in the medals' table with 28 golds.

American phenomenon Phelps, 19, eased through his Olympic opening in the swimming pool, launching his drive for a record-equaling seven gold medals by posting the fastest qualifying time in the 400m individual medley.

While Phelps dominated his event, Australian superstar Ian Thorpe conceded top qualifying spot in the 400m freestyle to compatriot Grant Hackett.

"I was pretty confident, it's the way I wanted to qualify," said Thorpe, who won three gold medals at the Sydney Games and has a chance to win six here.

Japan's double world champion Kosuke Kitajima made a sensational start, setting an Olympic record of 1min 0.03sec in the 100-metre breaststroke

heats.

"My coach told me to just concentrate on my strokes, and I did," said Kitajima.

"I was thinking only about the rhythm."

British rower Matthew Pinsent eased into his attempt to win a fourth Olympic gold medal when his coxless four won their heat to qualify for the semifinal.

The British crew of Pinsent, Olympic champion James Cracknell, Steve Williams and Ed Coode finished almost two seconds ahead of second-placed Italy.

"We were confident coming into the regatta and today has added to that," said Pinsent.

The dazzling opening ceremony went off without a hitch on Friday and helped soothe concerns about the most highly regarded Games in history, but the spectre of drugs still hung over the event.

Greece's superstar sprinter Kostadinov Kenteris, the reigning Olympic 200m champion, and his training partner Ekaterini Thanou were recovering from a motorcycle accident as the host nation's Olympics officials met to discuss whether to kick them out of the Games.

The Greek press had turned against the man whose rare but spectacular appearances on the track had made him a hero in his homeland but an enigma elsewhere. Many newspapers also called for Thanou, the silver medalist in the women's 100m in Sydney, to be punished.

"No more humiliation for our country: the Greek Olympic Committee must have their heads if they're guilty," sports daily Filathlos said.

The Greek organisers confirmed Kenteris was among the original choices to light the Olympic flame, but that honour went instead to 1996 windsurfing gold medalist Nikolaos Kakkamanakis.

6 political leaders

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Islami is also in the surveillance list.

The rest are a district-level and a city-level leader of main opposition AL and one belonging to its youth wing, Jubo League.

Law enforcers did not ask the six anything, the source said, adding none of them is even aware of the watch.

The Friday's meeting issued sharp directive to maintain absolute secrecy in the vigilance so that the political leaders can never sense it.

But, while the investigators are hunting for clues, they are yet to act on the allegation brought by local AL

leader Nunu Miah, arrested in connection to the August-7 grenade attack, of local BNP legislator Ilias Ali's involvement in the blasts.

According to the source, Ali's name is not on the watch list and the investigators are not at all willing to verify the allegation.

TRANSFERS
The authorities suspended Sylhet Superintendent of Police (SP) Shahadat Hossain three days after the May 21 grenade blast at Hazrat Shahjalal Shrine that killed three and injured 75 others including Bangladesh-born British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury. The then Kotwali Police Station OC S A Newaji was also transferred a few days later, replaced by OC of South Surma Police Station Shafiqur Rahman Mukul.

But Mukul was sent back yesterday to South Surma Police Station and OC of Boroilekha Police Station of Moulavibazar Mahbubur Rahman took over as the new OC of Kotwali.

Confirming the transfer, Sylhet SP Mostafa Kamal told The Daily Star yesterday, "It's not for any failure, we've transferred Mukul in order to improve the law and order."

"The authorities earlier made Mukul the Kotwali OC only for the time being and now have decided to send him back to his post at South Surma Police Station," he explained.

"We may bring change to some more important posts, if necessary, to improve the law and order. Some more efficient officers may be brought here," SP Kamal said, adding the transfer might take place immediately, if necessary, or a few months later.

Biman identifies

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Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin in the chair.

"Biman crossed all its previous records by carrying 15,43,491 passengers and earning Tk 1952.31 crore in the last fiscal year," the minister said, terming Bangladesh Biman a profitable concern now.

The meeting was apprised that Biman saved about Tk 10 crore from insurance premiums during last two years. It also saved Tk 217 crore from 12 sectors through austerity.

The minister hoped that Biman would also be able to earn Tk 78 lakh annually through technical handling of foreign airlines.

Among others, Secretary of the ministry Akhter Hossain Khan, Joint Secretary Shahab Ullah, Biman's Managing Director M Mahmudur Rahman, executive directors and other high officials attended the meeting.

Humayun Azad

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death is natural or not, he said.

"Prof Azad was found dead in his Munich apartment by a member of the German PEN Centre when he did not come to an appointment with the PEN member," a German embassy press release said on Friday.

Azad went to Germany on August 8 on a fellowship from PEN International and intended to do several months of research on romantic German writer Heinrich Heine.

Bangladesh Chhatra League, student wing of the Awami League, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-backed Chhatra League, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree and the Mancha staged separate processions and rallies on the campus.

They demanded an international probe into the death of Azad, a staunch feminist and a fearless critic of fundamentalism and human rights violations, saying they smelt a foul play in the death.

Azad Mancha submitted a memorandum to the vice-chancellor of the university, demanding accurate information on the death in 24 hours.

A range of other organisations voicing the same demand includes Bangladeshesr Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Chhatra Kendra and Bangladesh Samrajibi Nari Moitree.

The director general of the foreign ministry called Azad's family by phone yesterday and told them the author's body would be flown home according to their wish.

The family said they would take a decision after discussing the issue among themselves.

The family will inform the foreign ministry of their decision today to bring the body to Dhaka as soon as possible, Siddiqui told The Daily Star.

"The family hopes to receive the body by the end of this week, depending on cooperation from the German embassy and the government."

Biman Bangladesh Airless runs only a direct flight between Frankfurt and Dhaka on Thursday this week, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

"The family may choose an alternative airliner to bring the body home," he said, adding "But the route might be quite cumbersome and longer.

UNB adds: The German police released the author's body after autopsy and sent it to mortuary in Munich.

"Autopsy has already been done and nothing suspicious was indicated for the cause of his death," Bangladesh Ambassador to Berlin Alimul Haque told the private news agency by phone.

Both the governments of Bangladesh and Germany are now waiting to know the desire of Azad's family to initiate the process of bringing the body home, he said.

The ambassador said obtaining reports of two other tests to examine toxin and alcohol levels would take two weeks time.

Asked about the party Azad attended on Wednesday night, the diplomat said the function was held on the lawn of the apartment where he had been staying, but could not say who were the others present there.

Environment ministry restarts projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Environment and Forest has decided to start immediate implementation of various projects under it to create job opportunity for the flood-hit people as part of post-flood rehabilitation programmes.

It has also decided to disburse Tk 27 crore among people engaged in participatory afforestation.

The decisions were taken yesterday at an emergency meeting at the ministry chaired by Tariqul Islam, minister for environment and forest.

The minister asked officials concerned to disburse the funds among the target people and launch the projects without delay. He warned of tough action against any officials and staff for any irregularities and corruption in discharging their duties, meetings sources said.

State Minister Jafrul Islam Chowdhury was also present at the meeting, attended by the secretary of the ministry, chief conservator of forest, four deputy conservators and all the 13 conservators of forest, and 61 divisional forest officers.

The image of the forest department is completely ruined due to corruption of a section of dishonest forest officials, the minister said. There are also allegations that some officials help land grabbers to encroach upon forestlands, he mentioned.

The minister also said a section of officials allegedly advised land grabbers to file cases against each other through some understanding, claiming ownership of forestlands and in several cases these fake claimants managed to get the lands.

Tariqul ordered effective steps to recover the forestlands devoured by land grabbers and action against the corrupt officials.

The meeting was informed that the current floods caused a huge damage to forest property like nurseries and roadsides trees.

The minister asked forest officials to go for fresh plantation of saplings and building nurseries.

4 killed

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upazila headquarters, at around 4:00pm.

As the passengers rushed to leave the boat, the roof collapsed. Idris Ali, 42, a kabiraj (indigenous physician) of Majikholra village in Doarabazar, died on the spot and seven went missing, while the rest swam ashore.

Police yesterday rescued the bodies of Anwara Begum, 30, wife of Dudu Miah, her son Dulal Ahmed, 5, and daughter Tahmina, 2, from near the spot. The family of Chatibahar village in Companyganj was returning home.

Bangladeshis

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substantial amount of remittance in Euros to Bangladesh, said Biman staff seek bribe even for minimal service.

A number of Bangladeshi expatriates in Belgium including Shafiqur Rahman himself made written appeals to Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, civil aviation and tourism minister. Copies of the appeals were sent to the authorities concerned in Brussels and Dhaka, but they are yet to take any action, Rahman said.

Govt raises

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the floods in 1998, the agriculture rehabilitation programme boosted farm output by 3.24 percent from 1.63 percent of the previous year. The agricultural production reached as high as 6.92 percent in the 1999-2000 financial year.

The agriculture ministry, meanwhile, has revised up the flood damage estimates in the agriculture sector to Tk 3,184 crore, including the flooding in April this year. The revised damage assessment of the current flood now stands at Tk 2,291 crore, which earlier was about Tk 1,800 crore.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), an independent civil society think-tank, on Thursday put its initial flood damage figure in the farm sector at Tk 2,920 crore.

Each listed farmer would get seeds and fertilisers for only one crop against 1 bigha of land. They would 5 kg seeds and 25 kg fertilisers for cultivating planted aman, 5 kg seeds and 30 kg fertilisers for boro aman, 17 kg seeds and 30 kg fertilisers for wheat, 2.5 kg hybrid seeds and 40 kg fertilisers for maza, 1.5 kg seeds and 20 kg fertilisers for mustard, 5 kg seeds and 10 kg fertilisers for mashkolai, 1 kg seeds and 20 kg fertilisers for vegetables, sugarcane seeds weighing 1,000 kg and 20 kg fertilisers, Tk 1,000 in cash and 24 kg fertilisers for betel leaf and 0.5 kg seeds and 20 kg fertilisers for cultivating chilli.

As many as 12 lakh farmers of the 26.65 lakh farmers cultivate boro paddy. The seed distribution is slated for a November 20 end and the distribution of fertiliser that starts on October 7 will draw to a close on December 31.

Hasina slates Khaleda

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programmes to observe "national mourning day" by AL.

The AL chief said the alliance government has been killing political leaders and workers, intellectuals and journalists across the country to tighten its grip on power to carry on with looting the country.

On assassination of Bangabandhu, Hasina, the slain leader's eldest daughter, said the defeated forces and conspirators of 1971 killed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to take revenge of their disgraceful defeat in the Liberation War.

She bitterly criticised the prime minister for celebrating birthday on August 15 and wondered how come a sensible person in the context of Bangladesh observe birthday on August 15, the day killers did not even spare little boy Sheikh Russel.

"By observing the fake birthday on

this mourning day, she (Khaleda) proves that she too had been involved in the murder," Hasina added.

AL Advisory Committee Member Abul Maal Abdul Muhit was the keynote speaker at the programme. Among others, senior AL leaders Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Supreme Court Bar Association President Barrister Rokon Uddin Mahmud, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Hasanul Huq Inu and Jatiya Party (JP) leader Sheikh Shahidul Islam spoke at the programme.

UNB adds: Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will not celebrate her 60th birthday today. Instead, she will fly to Patuakhali and Barisal today to visit flood-hit areas and distribute relief materials among the flood victims, according to sources at the Prime Minister's Office.

Hutu rebels kill 180

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"The scene is absolutely horrific. There are many people burnt," Nabaa said by telephone from Bukavu, capital of South Kivu. She said the attackers were well armed and organised.

Isabelle Abric, spokeswoman for the UN mission in Burundi, said 159 people were killed on the spot and 101 others were wounded in the attack on the camp in Gatumba, 12 miles from the Congolese border. At least 30 of the wounded died later in hospital, she said.

The bloodshed in the camp came after gunmen attacked a Burundian army position about a half-mile away.

"These guys were armed with grenades, machetes, and automatic weapons. While the attack was going on they were beating drums," said Fernando del Mundo, a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva.

Pasteur Habimana, spokesman for the National Liberation Forces, justified the assault on the camp by saying Burundian soldiers were hiding there after the attack on the post.

"We were also attacked by armed Banyamulenge militiamen who lived in this camp," he said. "The camp was a genuine Banyamulenge militiamen headquarters."

Habimana earlier said the victims were killed by Burundian soldiers who fled into the refugee camp to escape the rebel assault.

A spokesman for the Burundian army could not be immediately reached for comment.

The National Liberation Forces is the last main rebel movement fighting the government in Burundi's 10-year-old civil war, which has killed some 260,000 people.

War broke out in 1993, when Hutus

Forex reserve

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training to the police personnel and the necessity of raising highway police for further improvement of the law and order.

The meeting was informed that the country's foreign exchange reserve has crossed \$3.2 billion mark attributable to increased remittances, export earnings and congenial atmosphere for foreign assistance.

Cabinet Secretary Sadaat Hossain informed the meeting that awarding punishment to the offenders by the speedy trial tribunals and other courts and nabbing the wrong-doers have led to the reduction of offences and improvement of the law and order.

He told the meeting that visits and inspections by the senior officials to the upazilas and districts to supervise the activities of the administration have yielded positive results.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Health and Family Welfare Minister Khondakher Musharraf Hossain, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed, Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami, Agriculture Minister MK Anwar, Post and Telecom-munications Minister Aminul Huq, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harnish Chowdhury, Cabinet Secretary Sadaat Hossain, Principal Secretary Kamal Siddiqui and secretaries concerned.

Nation mourns

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the country protesting the revocation of state mourning on the day and demanding immediate execution of the verdict on the killers of Bangabandhu and his family members.

In November 1998, the trial court awarded death sentence to 15 people accused of the murders, but the High Court later spared three of them. The case is still pending with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, which is short of one justice for forming a three-member division bench required to hear the leave to appeal petition.

The situation can be corrected if the government appoints a judge to the Appellate Division on ad hoc basis. But, according to informed quarters, possibility of such a move by the present government is almost nil. The case is unlikely to resume until March 2007, when the present chief justice will retire paving the way for a new judge to be appointed in the Appellate Division.

Today the national and the party flags will be flown at half-mast at all offices of the AL and its front organisations. The party will also hoist black

took up arms after Tutsi paratroopers assassinated the country's first democratically elected president, a Hutu. Burundi's Tutsi minority has effectively run the country for all but a few months since independence in 1962.

Burundian President Domitien Ndayizeye visited the camp Saturday and described the massacre as "a shame" and asked the Congolese government to assist in investigations.

"What I can say is that it is Burundi which has been attacked. The attackers killed innocent refugees who sought refuge in Burundi," Ndayizeye said. The rebels "declared that they attacked a military camp and that the soldiers fled in this camp but I saw no soldier's body except those of young children, women and old persons."

The attack occurred one day after Congolese Vice President Azarias Ruberwa visited the camp to encourage the refugees to return home.

In the Congolese capital, Kinshasa, government officials were heading into meetings Saturday to discuss the killings. They had no immediate comment.

United Nations officials are studying whether the attack was carried out with the assistance of Congolese tribal fighters known as the Mayi Mayi or Rwandan rebels based in eastern Congo, she said.

The Rwandan insurgents include members of the former army and the extremists Interahamwe militia who fled to Congo after playing a key role in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

More than 500,000 minority Tutsis and political moderates from the Hutu majority were killed in the 100-day slaughter organized by the extremist Hutu government then in power.

The massacre will further complicate UN efforts to encourage Congolese refugees to return home, said M'Hani Ladjouzi, head of the UN mission in Congo's troubled North Kivu province.

"This is a setback in our efforts to ensure security here," Ladjouzi said. "We are trying to find out who did this. Their aim is to complicate the situation. Obviously, they did this to stop all the efforts the international community is making."

Khulna editor sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A court yesterday sent the editor of the Daikin Prabartan, a newspaper published from Khulna city, to jail.

Judge AKM Ishiaque Hossain of the Court of District and Sessions Judge sent editor Mostafa Sarwar to Khulna Jail when he appeared to surrender to the court for a case filed against him with Dumuria Police Station on December 12, 2002. Idris Ali Sarder of Ranail village in Dumuria filed the case.

The court also rejected Sarwar's prayer for ad interim bail, as he was also accused in 13 other criminal cases filed with Dumuria and Batiaghata Police Stations.

The officer-in-charge of Dumuria Police Station said Sarwar demanded Tk 1 lakh as toll from Idris in 2002 and threatened to kill him if he failed to pay the sum.

UP chairman bullet-hit in attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A union parishad (UP) chairman, who had recently been expelled from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), was critically injured in an attack believed to be a sequel to party feud, in Satkania upazila on Friday night.

One of his associates too was hit with bullet in the attack.

Sadar UP chairman Mujibur Rahman, 28, also the vice president of Satkania thana BNP, and his close aide Mozaher Meah Sowdagar were chatting at a phone-fax shop at Koroijanagar at Sadar union while they came under the attack at around 8.30pm.

A gang of up to 15 gunmen stormed the shop and fired indiscriminately at them.

Both Mujib and Mozaher were rushed to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) the same night.

Mujib underwent surgery twice to have the bullets removed from abdomen. He remained unconscious till filing of this report yesterday afternoon.

Followers and relatives of Mujib at the CMCH said the cadres loyal to thana BNP General Secretary Nurul Kabir and former Jamaat-e-Islami leader and UP Chairman Ahmadul Haq Chowdhury alias Ahmadya, who joined BNP recently, plotted the attack.

Sources said Mujib protested Ahmadya's joining BNP and he even lobbied the party high-ups Dhaka against this. "This might be the reason behind the Friday night's attempt on his life," a relative of Mujib told journalists at the CMCH.

Meanwhile, Satkania BNP President Moinul Hogue Chowdhury said the party expelled Mujib at an emergency meeting on August 5 and he was no more a BNP leader.

The BNP president while talking to The Daily Star yesterday cited several allegations against Mujib as reasons for the expulsion. The key allegations included his involvement in anti-social and anti-party activities, close link with notorious robbers and planning to kill Ahmadya.

"Lately his deeds made him many enemies. I guess, either they or any third party might have been involved in the attack," Moinul said.

Relatives yesterday said they were preparing to lodge a case naming Nurul Kabir and Ahmadya as prime suspects.

One hurt in Khulna bomb blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

One person was critically injured in a powerful bomb explosion here yesterday evening behind the residence of slain city Awami League president Manjurul Imam.

The blast blew off the right leg of Zahid Sheikh, 30, a day labourer, and also caused other injuries. He was admitted to Khulna General Hospital.

The place where the explosion took place at about 6:30 pm is also adjacent to Moti Masjid (mosque) at Sir Iqbal Road, and yards away from Khulna Press Club and Khulna office of the Dhaka daily, Jugantor.

Zahid said the bomb exploded as it came under his foot while he was passing through the area.

Senior officials of Khulna Metropolitan Police visited the spot after the blast, the latest in a series in the last few months.

6 names proposed for anti-corruption commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The search body for the anti-corruption commission has short-listed six persons to select the commissioners from.

The chairman of the body, Justice M A Aziz, along with his colleagues submitted the list Thursday to President Iajuddin Ahmad.

The president will choose one from the short-list as chairman and two as members of the commission.

The short-listed six are former chief election commissioner Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, former vice chancellor Professor Aminul Islam, former advisor to the caretaker government Major General (Rtd) Mainul Hossain Chowdhury, former secretaries Syed Alamgir Faruk Chowdhury and Abdul Karim, and former inspector general of police Golam Kibriya.

The search body held five meetings to make the selection, which was finalised on August 4.

The other members of the body are Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury, Comptroller and Auditor General Asif Ali, Public Service Commission Chairman Z N Tahmina Begum and immediate past cabinet secretary Akbar Ali Khan.

The Anti-corruption Commission Bill was passed by parliament on February 17 and the search body was formed on May 9.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmad expressed his satisfaction over submission of the short-list and told reporters, "Formation of the commission is now a matter of time."

20 killed in Afghan factional clash

AFP, Kabul

More than 20 people were killed in fighting between rival warlords in western Afghanistan yesterday, highlighting the fragile security situation weeks ahead of landmark presidential elections.

Around 21 militiamen were killed in ongoing fighting between two rival commanders for control of districts surrounding Herat, the largest and most prosperous city in western Afghanistan, a spokesman for one of the factions told AFP.

"There were some military movements in Shindand district and Chisti district and roughly 21 people were killed on both sides," said Qari Massoon, spokesman for provincial governor Ismail Khan.

Troops loyal to Khan, who is the most powerful military strongman in western Afghanistan, clashed with forces under the command of opponent Amanullah Khan.

The battle follows skirmishes between local militia and government forces in neighbouring Ghor province last month, in which three US soldiers working on disarming the militias were injured.

Fighting began at 2:00 am (2130 GMT) in Shindand district and Amanullah's troops seized Shindand district and fighting was continuing for control of the airstrip, commanders loyal to Ismael Khan told AFP.

Among those killed were "Herat garrison commander Saifullah and General Zakim Khan of the border brigade who supported Ismail Khan," Amanullah Khan told AFP.

He said his forces had taken control of Shindand and pushed Ismail Khan's fighters into neighbouring Adraskan district.

"We have captured Shindand totally from Khan's forces and now the fighting is going on in Adraskan district," he said.

Shindand, some 660 kilometres (412 miles) west of the capital Kabul, is a troubled district that has been controlled both by forces loyal to Ismail Khan, an ethnic Tajik, and

Amanullah Khan, a Pashtun.

The factions have clashed regularly in the past two years.

"Ismael Khan's forces attacked Amanullah's posts and that is when the fighting started," Wakeel Daulat Sarwari told AFP.

"Ismael Khan's forces attacked Amanullah's posts and that is when the fighting started," Wakeel Daulat Sarwari told AFP.

However, the government said Afghan army forces would come out in support of Ismail Khan if the fighting continued.

"Any action which would be taken would be in support of Ismail Khan," a senior defence department official told AFP.

The official said Khan's troops were considered to be a government force, defending themselves against Ahmanullah's militias.

President Hamid Karzai condemned the fighting as "unlawful and against the national integrity of the country and public security," and said the attack on the government-owned airport was an attack on the country's integrity requiring urgent action, a spokesman from the president's office told AFP.

"No individual or group will be allowed to make moves which would endanger national security, so the government asks all individuals and groups involved in military movements in western Afghanistan to move back to their original locations," the spokesman added.