

Democrats renew call for pullout of Iraq

AFP, Washington

Anti-war Democrats yesterday called for a withdrawal of most combat troops from Iraq to begin within four months and completed by the end of next April.

In their latest attempt to tie President George W Bush's hands on the war, Democrats unveiled a new amendment to a Senate defence policy bill that would subject the US mission in Iraq to strict limits.

The bill, co-sponsored by Senator Carl Levin, chairman of the Senate Armed Services committee and fellow Democrat Jack Reed, would curtail operations to fighting terrorism, training Iraqi troops and protecting US assets.

It would effectively end Bush's strategy to surge up to 30,000 extra troops into Iraq, and is designed to exploit rising concern among Bush's Republican backers over developments in Iraq.

Bush has previously vetoed a Democratic attempt to force him to accept troop withdrawal timetables,

More donation for cancer hospital

Mofizur Rahman Foundation has donated Tk 10 lakh to Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital yesterday, says a press release.

Mofizur Rahman, former secretary and chairman of Mofizur Rahman Foundation, handed over the money to Dhaka Ahsania Mission President Kazi Rafiqul Alam at its office at Dhanmondi in the city.

Tk 5 lakh has been donated for one bed in memory of Mofizur Rahman's late sister Sultana Rahman. The remaining Tk 5 lakh will be kept as FDR and its profits will be used for the treatment of poor cancer patients.

but congressional leaders are trying to piece together a veto-proof two-thirds majority for the new bill.

"President Bush had a pre-surge strategy, and a surge strategy and now apparently he is going to offer a post surge strategy later this week," said Levin.

"All of these strategies are marked by one thing -- they all have an open-ended commitment with

the US forces in the middle of sectarian violence."

The measure calls for the reduction of US troops to start no later than 120 days after the enactment of the law.

It states "The Secretary of Defense shall complete the transition of United States forces to a limited presence and missions ... by April 30, 2008."

Kandy Test from today

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for Tushar Imran. Left-arm pacer Syed Rasel joins the team in the place of under-performing Mohammad Sharif.

This is the first time Bangladesh, who have faced the islanders nine times so far, are going to play at Asgiriya Stadium, which offers assistance to seam bowlers and is the home ground of champion off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran and ace batsman Kumar Sangakkara.

The match will start at 11am Bangladesh time with TEN Sports beaming live coverage from the world heritage city famous for surrounding hills and tea gardens.

The venue, though, is not lucky for the Lankans who have lost nine and won five out of 19 games played here in the past.

But the statistics can hardly be encouraging for the Tigers, who suffered an innings and 234-run defeat in the first game at SSC, the biggest margin of defeat against the hosts, before being crushed at P Sara by an innings and 90 runs inside three days.

The whole team have been focusing on one issue since: how they can improve their first innings performance after being bundled out for 89 and 62 -- Bangladesh's lowest total ever -- in the first essays of the two Tests in the Lankan capital.

Bangladesh flew in experienced middle-order batsman Tushar, who has played just four Tests in his five-

year international career and has only 55 runs in eight innings, to find out a solution as most of the top batsmen including former skipper Habibul Bashar and opener Shahriar Nafees are completely out of form.

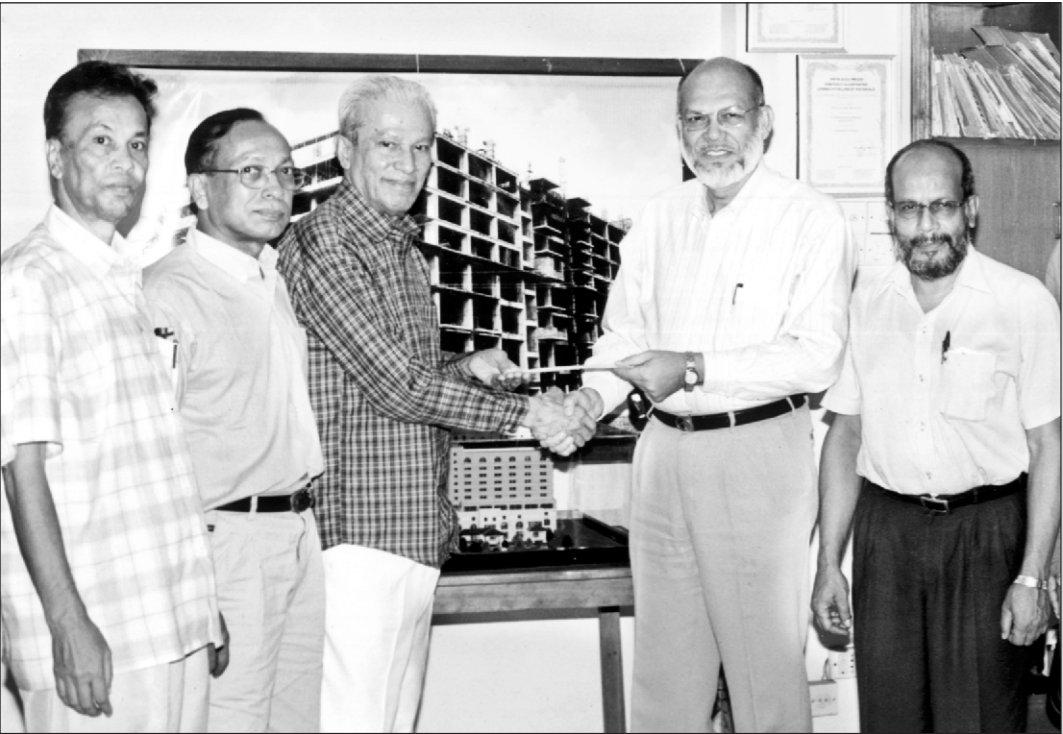
Bashar, who has scored 36 runs in four innings, and Nafees, who made 93 in four innings, must wake up to keep their places in the one-day side.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, will announce their team this morning with one change confirmed as left-arm pacer Chaminda Vaas went back to England to resume county cricket after the second Test. Having missed the first two Tests, injured opener Upul Tharanga has returned.

TEAMS

BANGLADESH: Mohammad Ashraful (captain), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (vice-captain), Javed Omar, Shahriar Nafees, Habibul Bashar, Rajin Saleh, Tushar Imran, Mushfiqur Rahim (wicketkeeper), Mohammad Rafique, Shahadat Hossain and Syed Rasel.

SRI LANKA (from): Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara (vice-captain), Malinda Warnapura, Michael Vandort, Upul Tharanga, Chamara Silva, Tillekeratne Dilshan, Prasanna Jayawardene, Farveez Mahroof, Muttiah Muralidaran, Lasith Malinga, Dilhara Fernando and Sujeewa Silva.



Mofizur Rahman, former secretary and chairman of Mofizur Rahman Foundation, hands over a cheque for Tk 10 lakh to Dhaka Ahsania Mission President Kazi Rafiqul Alam at its office at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.



PHOTO: ISPR

Lt General Md Jahangir Alam Choudhury, Quarter Master General of Bangladesh Army, inaugurates the Tree Plantation Campaign-2007 of Bangladesh Army by planting an Amropali sapling beside the Army Central Mosque in the city yesterday.

Bangladesh Army in Ivory Coast

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and consider it a friendly country, due to the participation of Bangladesh Army in the United Nations (UN) Peace Keeping Mission.

The Bangladesh Army's cooperation with the local people including providing medical services besides their specified peace keeping duties made the Ivorians befriend Bangladesh and its people so quickly.

The Ivorians wrote on a wall of the Bangladesh Centre Bhavan, "Dedicated to the Ivorian-Bangladesh Friendship". Flags of both the countries are painted over the entry gate of the centre.

The Bangladesh Centre was established in May 2005, where apart from Diby three other Ivorian citizens are also working as staff.

The initiative to establish the centre was taken by the first battalion of Bangladesh peace keeping contingent BANBAT-1 of the UN Peace Keeping Mission ONUC, before the contingent returned home the same year. The effort was sparked by a desire to leave their memory in a lasting way there for the Ivorians.

Diby said, "Commander of the First Battalion of Bangladesh Col Iqbal initiated the idea of setting up the centre."

Later, Zuenoula City Mayor Zan Bi Goi allotted an abandoned one-storey house on half a hectare of land in his own city for establishing the centre.

Members of the Bangladesh contingent set up a park in an open space next to the centre containing a playground with many sports equipment for local children.

The Bangladesh Centre of Zuenoula is open for visitors from Monday to Saturday every week from 8:00am to 5:00pm.

Many cultural programmes and exhibitions of Nakshi Kantha (embroidered quilt), handicrafts, saris and paintings on different Bangladeshi subjects are also held there.

Diby said about 50 visitors come to the centre every week. The visitors are mainly residents of Zuenoula city and its adjacent areas although foreign tourists also visit the centre, he added.

The Bangladesh Centre authorities sometimes even extend the visiting hours for special visitors if they inform the authorities earlier, said the centre director.

He also said Zuenoula city mayor provides 50 thousand CFA (Ivorian currency), equivalent to \$100, every month to the Bangladesh Centre to meet its monthly expenses from his budget.

The mayor intends to turn the centre into a big institution with more attractions, Diby added.

The members of the Bangladesh battalion have to return home after ending their mission in Ivory Coast but the Bangladesh Centre of Zuenoula will remain, he said.

"It is now the only Bangladesh Centre in Ivory Coast and it will be here forever", Diby said.

Outgoing Commanding Officer of the Bangladesh Battalion-1 (BANBAT-1) in Zuenoula Lt Col

Mohammad Maksudur Rahman told The Daily Star on Sunday on the premises of his battalion office, "The Ivorians will keep the Bangladesh Centre with them even after the UN Peace Keeping Mission ends."

The local authorities already talked to the battalion regarding the plan, he said adding that they will keep communications with the local authorities through different ways including e-mails and they will cooperate with the local authorities whenever needed. The Ivorians will also go to Bangladesh, he added.

He also said if an embassy of Bangladesh could be set up in Ivory Coast in future it would be easier to maintain the centre there.

Lt Col Maksud will soon return to Bangladesh finishing his duties in Ivory Coast, and Lt Col Mesbah Ul Alam Chowdhury already reached here to take up the charge as a new commanding officer.

BANBAT-1 has also arranged computer training and English language learning courses in the Bangladesh Centre for the local people.

Lt Col Maksud said hundreds of people visit the centre. Every Wednesday a cultural programme is performed by children, which the Zuenoula Radio broadcasts.

He also said the Bangladesh Centre was established to provide an opportunity for the Ivorians to learn about Bangladesh's culture and heritage -- an effort that seems to be reaping much success.

Sabina

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Though the disease is in advanced stage, it is treatable, he added.

Family sources said the process of taking Sabina to Singapore is on. But it is yet to be confirmed.

Her eldest sister Nazma Yasmeen said the family members asked for government's financial support for her treatment when Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed came to see her on Monday.

Sources said the country's lone air ambulance provider IPSSL has offered to fly Sabina abroad at a concessional rate and without any profit. She might be admitted to Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore.

The noted singer was admitted to the hospital on June 12 with fever and severe pain in her abdomen. She underwent a liver operation, and doctors now say she is suffering from 'Non hodgkin's Lymphoma', a sort of tissue cancer.

UNB adds: Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday donated Tk four lakh to ailing singer Sabina Yasmin for her better treatment.

The money was given from the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund.

On Monday, the chief adviser visited the singer at Labaid Specialized Hospital in the city and enquired about her latest health condition.

Sabina, who is suffering from cancer, is likely to be flown to Singapore soon for better treatment.

Road accidents kill 3

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed in separate road accidents in Pabna and Faridpur yesterday.

Our correspondent in Pabna reports: Two people were crushed to death under the wheels of speeding trucks at village Shinga in Pabna in the morning.

A truck knocked down Abdul Mannan, 30, a machine operator at Square Pharmaceuticals Limited, on Dhaka-Pabna highway at around 6:00am when he was going to his workplace.

Local people rushed him to Pabna General Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

The truck sped away. A case was filed with Pabna Police

Station.

In another accident, a truck ran over Mosharaf Hossain, 14, in the early morning. He was rushed to Pabna General Hospital where he died.

A correspondent in Faridpur adds: One person was killed when a truck fell into a roadside ditch at Arpara in Modhukhali yesterday morning.

The victim, Habibur Rahman, 35, a fruit trader, was travelling in the Dhaka-bound truck coming from Jessore.

The accident took place at around 6:00am as the driver lost control of the truck, police said.

Both the driver and his helper escaped. The body was sent to morgue for autopsy.