

Lanka heading back to pre-truce violence

Say peace monitors

AFP, Colombo

Nordic peace monitors have warned Sri Lanka is sliding back to its days of all-out warfare, with the past week seeing the government and Tamil rebels trading bombs and bullets that left scores dead.

The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), put in place by peace broker Norway to monitor a 2002 ceasefire agreement, has now said it was "alarmed" at the situation.

At least 52 combatants were killed and 25 wounded in fresh fighting between security forces and Tamil rebels in Sri Lanka's embattled north during the weekend, the defence ministry said yesterday.

With the upsurge in clashes along the de facto frontlines separating the mini-state held by the guerrillas, the military stepped up the already tight security in the capital, police said.

Heavily-armed troops and police searched almost all vehicles

entering the capital of 650,000 people causing long traffic delays.

"The rising number of civilian casualties in Sri Lanka is a cause for grave concern to the SLMM," the organisation said, referring to twin bomb attacks that rocked the capital of Colombo and aerial and ground bombings in rebel areas.

"The SLMM is alarmed about the situation that closely resembles a level of violence associated with the period prior to the signing of the ceasefire agreement in 2002," it said.

"In four days, from 25 to 28 November, 49 civilians have been killed and 60 injured in incidents involving heavy civilian casualties."

The ceasefire has been progressively deteriorating for many months, but recent weeks have seen a sharp acceleration of the 35-year-old conflict -- Asia's longest-running civil war.

Earlier this year, the government ousted the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from the east of the island, confining them to

their mini-state in the north.

Last month, the rebels' top political leader and chief peace negotiator S.P. Thamilselvan died in one of the almost daily government air raids. Commando infiltrations of the north also appear to have been stepped up.

In turn, the rebels have continued to deploy suicide bombers and have also added light aircraft, which have struck as far south as Colombo, to their arsenal.

The SLMM was set to monitor the peace and keep track of ceasefire violations -- but now it cannot keep up and stopped issuing rulings on hostilities in May.

The question now being asked by many observers is whether the SLMM, which has no power to enforce the truce agreement, should still be here.

The island's powerful defence secretary, Gotabhaya Rajapakse, has accused the Nordic monitors of being on a "holiday" in the tropical island.

On Tuesday, Tamil Tiger chief

Velupillai Prabhakaran said peace talks were a waste of time and also vowed to strike back at the island's "genocidal" Sinhalese-dominated government. He also said the SLMM had failed to speak out against government violations.

But the peace monitors say they are staying put for the time being, in the event the government and the Tigers may wear each other out on the battlefield in the coming months.

"We still have a role. We continue to maintain a dialogue between both sides. It's like having an infrastructure in place the day they decide to have talks," an SLMM spokeswoman said.

The head of the SLMM, retired Norwegian army general Lars Solberg, said his team found itself in a "catch 22" situation.

"We are damned if we do and we are damned if we don't," he said earlier this year, referring to the debate on whether there was any point in continuing a peace mission when there was no peace.

India tests interceptor missile

AFP, Bhubaneswar

India yesterday successfully tested a new interceptor missile in the eastern state of Orissa, defence sources said.

The test took place at Wheeler Island, off the coast of eastern Orissa state and 180km from state capital Bhubaneswar, an official said, asking not to be named.

No target missile was used in the trial, which was meant to prepare for a final test in the next few days in which the nuclear-capable surface-to-surface Prithvi II (Earth II) will be targeted, said the sources, who also declined to be named.

The medium-range Prithvi (earth) is India's first locally-built ballistic missile, and one of five being developed by New Delhi, along with the Agni (fire), Trishul (trident), Akash (sky) and Nag (snake).

Nuclear-armed India and Pakistan routinely carry out missile tests and normally notify each other in advance. They have fought three wars, two of them over the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir.

India may scrap 600-mln-dlr Eurocopter deal

AFP, New Delhi

India's army may scrap a 600-million-dollar deal for 197 helicopters from an EADS unit because of complaints about the bidding process and the role of agents, an official said Sunday.

India's policy-making Defence Acquisition Committee is expected to issue a fresh tender for the helicopters in the next financial year, said an official with the committee who did not want to be named.

An Indian army spokesman declined comment on the deal, awarded in February 2007 as part of an army modernisation programme.

The official said New Delhi was probing links between an army general and Indian agents of Eurocopter, part of the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company, which makes civil and military aircraft.

The deal was suspended in June 2007 on the recommendation of a federal watchdog overseeing major government purchases.

"Some aspects of the deal probed by the Central Vigilance Commission also included complaints from (US-based) Bell Helicopter that it had been rejected on flimsy grounds," the committee official said.

Two Koreas agree on cross-border train from next week

AFP, Seoul

North and South Korea have agreed to run a regular daily cross-border freight train service from next week for the first time in over half a century, officials said yesterday.

Negotiators from both sides on Saturday mapped out details on the rail service at talks in the North in a follow-up to their leaders' agreement, the South's unification ministry said in a statement.

President Roh Moo-hyun and North Korean leader Kim Jong-il agreed at a historic summit in early October to resume regular freight services, and both sides last month set December 11 for their inauguration.

The service, the first since the 1950-53 Korean War, will begin with a twice-daily border crossing by a 10-carriage cargo train, the ministry said.

The train will leave Munsan in the South at 9:00 am (0000GMT) and reach Bongdong in the North before returning to Munsan at 2:00 pm, it said.



Turkish President Abdullah Gul (L) shakes hands with his Pakistani counterpart Pervez Musharraf (R) upon his arrival at Chaklala military airbase in Rawalpindi yesterday. Gul arrived in Pakistani capital, becoming the first foreign leader to do so since the declaration of emergency rule.

Sharif says he's not extremist

AP, Islamabad

Soon after he returned from eight years in exile, Nawaz Sharif reminded his followers that he was the prime minister who made Pakistan a nuclear power.

That popular move among Pakistanis, together with Sharif's reputation for fostering close ties with Islamic militants, raised the spectre in a jittery West of a nuclear-armed Pakistan with religious ideologues at the helm.

But former US officials who know Sharif and analysts who follow Pakistan's politics portray a

savvy politician who is far from the religious extremist he's sometimes made out to be. And Sharif himself says he shuns extremism.

"Let me be clear I have been condemning all sorts of terrorism, whether in Pakistan or outside Pakistan," Sharif said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We are moderates, we follow moderation and nothing except moderation."

"Remarks are made by other countries without taking (into consideration) our cooperation that we have extended in the past. To me this is unreasonable and I am disappointed."

Thai king calls on people to unite

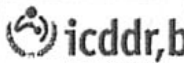
AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej yesterday called on Thais to unite as the kingdom prepares to hold its first general elections since last year's coup.

"I am requesting the army and every walk of Thais to ask whether our nation is important enough," the king told more than 2,000 military officers at a parade in central Bangkok.



Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej (R) and Queen Sirikit review the honour guard as a part of a celebration to commemorate his 80th birthday at the Royal Plaza in Bangkok yesterday. Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej, world's longest-reigning monarch celebrates his 80th birthday on December 5.

TENDER NOTICE					Date: 02.12.2007
1	Ministry/Division		Ministry of Health & Family Welfare		
2	Agency		ICDDR,B		
3	Procuring Entity Name		Executive Director, ICDDR,B		
4	Procuring Entity District		Mohakhali, Dhaka.		
5	Invitation for		Procurement of Imported Goods Related Services (Selection of C&F Agent)		
6	Invitation Ref No & Date		Memo No. ICDDR,B/Mohakhali/Procurement/07/73 Date: 02.12.2007		
7	Procurement Method		Open Tendering Method, PPR-2003		
8	Budget and Source of Funds		IDA through RPA (GoB)		
9	Project Name (if applicable)		Vertical Extension and Renovation of Research and Hospital Building-ICDDR,B, Dhaka, Bangladesh		
10	Tender Package Number & Name		Package No. 5 Procurement of Imported Goods Related Services (Selection of C&F Agent)		
11	Tender Publication Date.		03.12.2007		
12	Tender Schedule last selling date		27.12.2007		
13	Tender Closing Date and Time		Date: 30.12.2007	Time: 11:00 A.M.	
14	Tender Opening Date and Time		Date: 30.12.2007	Time: 11:30 A.M.	
15	Name & Address of the office(s)		Address		
	- Selling Tender Document (Principal)		Treasury Section, 2 nd Floor, Hospital Building, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.		
	- Selling Tender Document (Others)		N/A		
	- Receiving Tender Document		Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.		
	- Opening Tender Document		Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.		
16	Eligibility of Tenderer		i) The tenderers shall be genuine C&F agent(s), having valid C&F license, VAT registration certificate, trade license etc. ii) Tenderer shall have minimum 15 (fifteen) years of over all experience in clearing and forwarding business of imported goods / materials. iii) Tenderers shall submit documents for handling minimum value for Tk. 2.00 (two) crore of single shipment for last 3 (three) years working with Govt/ International / UN organization.		
17	Identification of Lots, Tender Security, Completion Time and Price of Tender Document				
Pkg No	Identification	Location	Tender Security / earnest money Amount (Tk.)	Completion Time / validity of Contract	Price of Tender Document (in cash)
Pkg-5	Procurement of Imported Goods Related Services (Selection of C&F Agent)	ICDDR,B 68, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmmed Sharani Mohakhali, Dhaka.1212	Tk. 50,000/= (Taka fifty thousand) only.	December, 2009	Tk. 3,000/= (Taka three thousand) only. (non- refundable)
18	Name of Official Inviting Tender		Mr. M. Alam		
19	Designation of Official Inviting Tender		Controller, Procurement & Materials		
20	Address of Official Inviting Tender		ICDDR,B,68, Shahid Tajuddin Ahmmed Sharani Mohakhali, Dhaka.1212		
21	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender		Tel: 8860523-32	Fax: 9860620	e.mail malam@icddr.org
22	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders. This procurement shall be guided under PPR-2003.				
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ADMISSION NOTICE

Applications are invited for admission to the First Year BDS course of Bangladesh Dental College for the Session 2007-2008.

Eligibility of candidates
Students who have passed SSC or equivalent in 2004/2005 and HSC or equivalent in 2006/2007 with Physics, Chemistry and Biology as essential subjects and have total GPA 8.00 (minimum requirement of GPA in SSC or HSC is 3.50) and at least GPA 3.00 in Biology in HSC or equivalent are eligible.

Candidates who have passed SSC or equivalent Examination before 2004 and HSC or equivalent Examination before 2006 respectively are not eligible to apply.

Students having O level and A level and also other foreign equivalent qualifications should apply through college or directly to DGHS for equivalency to GPA score after depositing prescribed fees in favour of the Director Medical Education & HMPD, DGHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka. Equivalence certificate must be submitted before last date of receiving application forms.

Foreign students : Foreign students having similar or equivalent qualifications are eligible to apply for foreign studentship provided they fulfill other conditions.

Admission Forms : Application forms will be available in the College Office from 04-12-2007 during office hour on payment of Tk. 1500/- (Taka One thousand five hundred) only + VAT @ 4.50% in cash.

Last date for receiving application forms : 31-12-2007

Written Test & Viva Voce : Written test will be held on 19-01-2008 at 10:00 a.m. in BDC Campus. Result of the written test will be hung in the college notice board. Viva Voce will be held on 21-01-2008. Candidates who qualify in the written test will only be called for viva voce. The final result of admission will be published in the college notice board on 22-01-2008 on the basis of written & viva voce marks and SSC & HSC GPA score.

Free studentship : Free studentship will be awarded to meritorious but financially handicapped students. Candidates must have at least GPA = 9.00 in the SSC and HSC Examinations taken together to become eligible for free studentship (minimum GPA 4.00 in any of SSC or HSC).

Interview of Free studentship guardians : 17-01-2008 at 10:00 a.m.

Prof. Mohammad Amirul Islam
BDS, MS, PDT, Ph.D, FICD (USA)
Principal
Bangladesh Dental College