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# Nerve-racking hours inside BDR zone

PINAKI ROY

The sound of some gunshots was heard around the BDR headquarters suddenly yesterday morning. After a while, the area turned into a battlefield because of frequent firing. In the meantime, some BDR jawans warned the residents of the quarter inside it not to come out from their dormitories.

He didn't know the fate of his father. There was no way to go out. Waiting for a couple of hours... understood that without help of from the outside they would not get rid of it. So, he sent messages to their relatives.

"Please send help. Critical situation" it was the first message and next message was: "Do something fast. They will destroy us."

A helpless son of a colonel, posted in BDR headquarters, sent the messages in the morning to his friends and relatives.

"I tried several times to his (colonel) cell phone but I could not reach him as it was off," said Emamul Haque, a brother of the colonel adding "I even could not come to know whereabouts my brother and his family," he said yesterday evening.

Later, somehow he came to know that his brother was killed in the gunfight.

This suspension not only experienced the major's family but a few hundred other families of high officials of BDR and BDR jawans and about 30 families of teacher of BDR school and college and BDR kindergarten also faced such situation as they are staying inside the BDR headquarter, sources said.

All the families became panicked and helpless when bullets

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People in New Market area came out on Mirpur Road after the gun fires stopped for a while yesterday afternoon. They ran for shelter again when shooting restarted.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# BDR arsenals outside city sealed; officers leave camps

STAR REPORT

Most of the arsenals of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sectors, battalions and companies were sealed soon after the paramilitary mutiny broke out at the BDR headquarters at Pilkhana yesterday, sources said.

Outside Dhaka, most of the senior BDR officials, deputed from army, left their camps after being informed of the mutiny in the capital, the sources added.

BDR has 46 battalions in 12 sectors while four of the battalions are in Dhaka.

All the BDR soldiers and officers across the country got tensed and panicked as the rebellious BDR personnel held the senior officials and their spouses hostages.

Meanwhile, some BDR personnel fired at least 25 blank shots in the border areas at Teknaf, Cox's Bazar around 11:00pm last night

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# OMS of rice to start in mid-March

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in parliament yesterday her government has planned to start Open Market Sale (OMS) of rice at upazila level across the country for low-income people from mid-March.

"Open Market Sale of rice will begin before the planned time (mid-March) if the upward trend of rice price continues," she said.

The government also plans to introduce food rationing for the ultra poor, said Hasina, also leader of the House.

Replying to lawmakers'

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# Dying for nothing

MAHBUBA ZANNAT and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Amjad Ali, 50, an asthma patient, was going to BDR hospital to buy medicine and inhaler in the morning and he knew nothing about the revolt of BDR jawans.

It was a danger Ali did not envisage and a stray bullet hit his head at about 10:00am. Amid firing of bullets by rebel BDR soldiers, he collapsed on the road near Jhigatala intersection.

Nearby people witnessed the incident but they could not come forward immediately to the aid of the elderly man because of heavy gunfire. He was later rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

"He did not know anything and was just going to buy medicine," said his wife Rashida Begum while she was crying at DMCH.

Stray bullets killed three civilians, including a student, and injured over 24 others of the

surrounding areas.

Three BDR officers were also killed and 17 officers and jawans injured during the gunfire. Sixteen injured BDR personnel were taken to Holly Family Hospital yesterday night for treatment.

Tarek Aziz, 23, a third year BBA student of People's University, was bullet hit in front of the lake at Jhigatala.

Aziz was returning to his residence from a teacher's house when the tragic incident took place. He was taken to Ibne Sina Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 3:00pm.

Vegetable vendor Hridoy Mia, 14, along with his father was selling vegetables in the city's Jhigatala area when a bullet hit Hridoy in his head. His father took him to a nearby hospital and later shifted to the DMCH where doctors declared him dead.

Some 19 people hit by bullets or shell splinter were taking treatment at DMCH. Lance

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# 15 more JS bodies formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The House yesterday formed 15 more parliamentary standing committees, completing the formation of all the parliamentary watchdog bodies.

On approval of Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina, Chief Whip Abdus Shahid proposed the formation of the committees and the House approved the motions in voice vote.

All the Awami League lawmakers were made the chiefs of the committees.

Speaker Advocate Abdul Hamid will lead the standing

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# They flee; uniforms left behind

EMRAN HOSSAIN

Sacks full of uniforms littered the alleys around Pilkhana BDR headquarters left by border guards, who fled in civil dress soon after the mutiny erupted in the morning.

Locals said hundreds of BDR personnel jumped over the boundary walls and fled the scene in a hurry.

They took their family members with them for a safe place and wore civil dress to dodge the eyes of army and law enforcers, who were on way to cordon off the entire area.

"As the shooting erupted in the morning, some BDR personnel jumped over the boundary walls along with their family members and fled for safety," said Anwar, a resident on Nazim

Uddin Lane in Zigatola.

"They took off their uniforms once they are outside the walls and fled in civil dress," said Salman Bhatt, a resident of Zigatola Rishipara.

"Wives and children of some BDR personnel got injured while jumping over the boundary walls. Some of them were seen running barefooted or in shoes with different pairs with injuries in their hands and legs," said Tariqul Islam, a resident of PWD staff quarters adjacent to the headquarters.

"The fleeing BDR personnel left the sacks here and there, either beside a lamppost or at the entrance to a house. We had decided not to touch any as we realised they would return soon," he added.

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# Hazari asked to surrender at trial court in 8 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed former Awami League lawmaker Joynal Abedin Hazari to surrender before the trial courts within eight weeks in connection with two criminal cases.

The two cases were filed with Feni police station against him on charges of torturing journalist Tipu Sultan in 2001 and disrupting public safety in 2002.

Upon two separate bail petitions filed by Hazari, alleged godfather of Feni district, the HC bench of Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury also asked the law enforcers not to harass

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

A policeman is seen lying wounded near Jigatola intersection yesterday afternoon.

# SL troops enter last rebel-held township

ANN, Colombo

Amidst fierce resistance from the LTTE the Army yesterday entered Puthukuduirippu, the last township held by the Tigers.

Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said troops of the 53 Division from the north east and the 58 Division and Task Force - IV moving from the West had reached the area and fierce fighting was on.

Troops had breached the 3.5km long LTTE Forward Defence Line (FLD) after a seven hour battle beginning Monday night the sources said.

With the troops advancing into Puthukuduirippu the area held by the LTTE had shrunk to 66sq.km consisting mainly of jungle, he said. Some Tigers had infiltrated the No War Zone and were mingling with civilians to avoid detection, the military said.

Military sources said that at least 40 Tiger cadres were killed in confrontations with the army and they were using all their resources to prevent the troops capturing the township.

Puthukuduirippu is 48km from Paranthan on the A-35 road from Paranthan to Mullaitivu.

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# Contempt rule on barrister Rafique

HC asks him to explain his 'objectionable' remark on an HC judge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule on barrister Rafique-UI Huq to show cause within three weeks why punitive action should not be taken against him on charge of contempt of court for using 'abusive' and 'objectionable' language about a judge of the court.

Responding to a contempt petition jointly filed by two SC lawyers, an HC bench also directed Rafique, one of the senior most lawyers of the Supreme Court (SC), to appear in person before it at 10:30am on March 22 in connection with this petition.

The HC bench comprised of Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury.

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# Brig Gen Zia new BTRC chairman

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Retired Brigadier General Zia Ahmed was appointed as chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) yesterday.

In a statement, the government announced the appointment that came after the resignation of Manzurul Alam, also a retired army officer.

"I received the appointment letter," said the new chairman while talking to The Daily Star yesterday adding, "I will join my new assignment today."

Ahmed served in signals

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

# New bill on RTI tabled in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has placed a bill in parliament seeking to enact a law to ensure people's empowerment by allowing them to have access to their right to information.

The bill was tabled yesterday when the much talked about Right to Information Ordinance 2008 ceased to be in force.

The bill titled 'Right to Information (RTI) Act 2009' will have a retrospective effect from October 20, 2008, the day the immediate past caretaker government promulgated the right to information ordinance.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad placed the bill in supplementary orders of the day and sent it to the parliamentary standing committee on information ministry to report back to the House on scrutiny within 10 days.

All sorts of registered organisations will now come under the law and be bound to provide citizens with information on matters of public interest once the RTI is passed.

The bill was placed just a day after the prime minister's

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# India declares red alert along border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday declared a red alert and enhanced security along its border with Bangladesh in the wake of the rebellion broke out in Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) headquarters in Pilkhana, Dhaka.

Border Security Force personnel were put on maximum alert along the Indo-Bangladesh border in the Northeast, West Bengal and Bihar.

According to a report from Agartala, Deputy Inspector General of BSF A K Singh said all border outposts were

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Prayer Timing		
February 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-05	6-10
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

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**Change of Date & Venue of Wedding Reception**

The Wedding Reception of Khaled and Shamai has been changed due to unavoidable circumstances. Now it will be held at OFFICERS CLUB, Baily Road on 3rd March 2009 at 7:30 Pm, instead of BDR Darbar Hall on 28th February 2009.

Inconvenience caused regretted

Shah Habibul Haque & Saira Nasreen  
01181001255, 01553358386, 8314558