

Civilians killed

FROM PAGE 16

The fighting has sparked a wave of international concern for the fate of 50,000 people still said by the United Nations to be trapped in the conflict zone.

On Monday, the military broke through rebel fortifications on the edge of a previously declared "no-fire" zone along the northeastern coast, sparking an exodus of more than 100,000 civilians. The rebels said at least 1,000 civilians were killed in that battle and the Red Cross said hundreds had been killed or wounded.

Neighbouring India, under pressure from its own Tamil population in the midst of a national election, sent National Security Adviser MK Narayanan and Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon to Sri Lanka on Friday to push for a cease-fire. The officials met with President Mahinda Rajapaksa, but details of the meeting were not immediately available.

"We are very unhappy at the continued killing in Sri Lanka. All killing must stop. There must be an immediate cessation of all hostilities," External Affairs Ministry spokesman Vishu Prakash said in a statement Thursday.

The military said it was pushing ahead with its offensive, engaging the rebels in heavy fighting Thursday in the tiny coastal strip still held by the Tamil Tigers, who once controlled a vast area of northern Sri Lanka.

International rights groups have accused the government of shelling densely populated civilian areas in the war zone and accused the rebels of holding the civilians as human shields. Both sides deny the accusations.

At least 6,432 civilians were killed in the intense fighting over the past three months and 13,946 wounded, according to a private UN document circulated among diplomatic missions in Sri Lanka in recent days. The casualties were reported as "verified data" in the document, which was given to The Associated Press by a foreign diplomat Friday.

The UN has declined to publicly release its casualty figures and had no immediate comment on the document.

The level of civilian deaths has increased dramatically as the fighting has worn on, according to the UN. An average of 33 civilians were killed each day at the end of January, a number that jumped to 116 by April, the document reported. More than 5,500 of those killed were inside a government-declared "no-fire" zone, the report said.

Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona said the government took special care to avoid civilian casualties, and said

Wasa

FROM PAGE 16

said an official who attended the meeting.

But the Wasa chairman warned the officials and employees against any kind of irregularity by taking this scope, the official said.

The zonal officials and executive engineers have been asked at the meeting to keep touch with the local lawmakers.

They were also asked to make a regular coordination with the army team who are working with Wasa.

The meeting asked the vigilance team of Wasa comprising deputy managing director, chief engineer and superintendent engineers to pay surprise visits during both day and night to find out problems if any and ensure attention of operators and other officials.

The meeting decided to take stern action against those who may be found distributing water lorries by breaking serials.

If everyone tries hard, it is possible to solve the water problem in the city, the chairman said at the meeting.

Wasa Managing Director Shahjahan Ali Molla, high officials, zonal officers and executive engineers, among others, attended the meeting.

One killed

FROM PAGE 16

Doulatur upazila of Kushtia had had a rivalry with Panna group under Lalpur of Natore over the control of chars for a long time.

Shahin, a robber of Lalpur, has been leading Panna group since its leader Panna was killed in Rab crossfire.

Lalchand group suddenly attacked Jamshed of Bilmaria under Lalpur upazilla yesterday and the clash started, locals said.

Mohammad Ali, officer in charge of Lalpur police station said the situation was under control.

many of those killed were combatants dressed in civilian clothing.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he would send a team of humanitarian experts to Sri Lanka to monitor the situation. The government agreed in principal to accept such a team but the details needed to be worked out, said Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe.

More than 106,000 civilians have fled the fighting since Monday, according to the government. The Doctors Without Borders aid group said those fleeing included large numbers of people suffering from blast, mine and gunshot wounds.

Aid workers and diplomats said the mass exodus of civilians was overwhelming government facilities in the region. The reports cannot be independently verified because journalists are barred from the war zone and the camps for those displaced by the fighting.

"We're very concerned that the humanitarian provisions in place to receive these people are not sufficient to meet immediate needs," said UN spokesman Gordon Weiss.

The rebels have been fighting to create an independent homeland for ethnic minority Tamils, who have faced decades of marginalisation by governments controlled by the ethnic Sinhalese majority.

Suicide bomb

FROM PAGE 16

Violence in Iraq is at its lowest levels since the months following the 2003 US-led invasion. But the recent attacks in Baghdad and elsewhere have exposed gaps in security as Iraq takes over from US forces in protecting the country.

Funerals began Friday for those killed in the suicide bombings a day earlier in Baghdad and in Diyala province.

Coffins were loaded on trucks near the Baghdad offices of the Iraqi Red Crescent, whose volunteers were distributing food parcels in central Baghdad when a suicide bomber killed 31 and wounded at least 50 others.

BDR mutiny

FROM PAGE 1

stores from the Local Supply Depot.

Sources in the CID, which is investigating the mutiny case, said a good number of detained BDR men who were penalised during Operation Dal-Bhat have admitted they were angry with the army officials in charge of the programme.

Asked, Abdul Kahar Akand, senior assistant superintendent of police (CID) and also investigation officer in the mutiny case, told The Daily Star, "Yes, some of the BDR men have admitted this."

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Major Gen Md Mainul Islam, director general of BDR, confirmed that the BDR men found to have been involved in corruption in the Dal-Bhat programme were indeed punished.

CID sources close to the cell monitoring the audiotapes and video footage said the BDR jawans flew into a temper as soon as the slain BDR DG Major General Shakil Ahmed began congratulating everyone on the success of Operation Dal-Bhat.

CID has so far arrested over 1,150 BDR men and 21 civilians in the mutiny case. Around 250 people including 15 civilians have been remanded for different periods.

Of the arrestees, 42 have already confessed to being involved in the bloodbath.

Kahar Akand said, "We are trying to complete the probe as soon as possible. However, we'd still need some more time for a better investigation."

Meanwhile, the government's probe committee is scheduled to submit its report on April 27. It has already been granted four extensions since formation.

3 injured

FROM PAGE 16

last caretaker government and the BNP-led four-party alliance government, said sources.

The AL cadres took control of the slum soon after the AL came to power. An internal feud developed among the AL cadres over its control.

Meanwhile, state minister for law Kamrul Islam visited the two injured AL and BCL leaders at the DMCH at about 5:30pm.

Shahbagh police said they were looking into the matter. None was arrested in connection with the incident.

Milk Vita

FROM PAGE 1

Two reports were submitted to the ministry and it sent those to the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC), but the commission did not take any measure following the reports that revealed embezzlement of about Tk 120 crore.

One of the reports say, some 20 Milk Vita plants were established between 2003 and 2006 compared to only 14 set up between 1973 and 2003. It observes that many of the 20 new plants were set up on political consideration instead of considering their viability.

One of the plants was established in Shibpur of Narsingdi, the electoral area of Mannan Bhuiyan, although milk was not much available there. The authorities tried to run the plant by bringing milk from faraway places, but failed. It now remains shut most of the time.

Expelled from BNP while being known as a 'reformist', the party's former secretary general Mannan Bhuiyan allegedly also had connections with the immediate past caretaker government.

When his attention was drawn last night to the allegation of embezzlement, Bhuiyan outright denied having any political motive behind setting up the plants, saying there is a separate forum which takes project decisions and implement those, and the ministry hardly plays any role in that.

"Those plants were set up to increase milk production to meet the rising demand and to reduce the country's dependence on import," he said adding that production might not be the same at all the plants. "One plant might produce more than another," he said.

Mannan Bhuiyan denied his involvement in any malpractice in Milk Vita and said he might react formally to the allegation soon after going through the probe reports.

Ctg Port

FROM PAGE 1

during high tide around 9:00am-- around 60 hours after the vessel movement had been suspended as cement-clinker laden vessel Seven Circles-25 sunk at the Karnaphuli estuary Tuesday.

Shipping Minister Afsarul Amin visited the port as well as the outer anchorage area and witnessed incoming vessels in the morning. He expressed satisfaction over the salvage operation by the three local teams.

Regarding the progress of the salvage activities CPA Member (Harbour and Marine) Captain S Arif Mahmud said, "The salvage teams are now fixing slings beneath the sunken vessel to drag it to the bank and get the channel clear." It may take another five to six days to complete, he added.

The minister at this point instructed the port authority to think of procuring CPA's own salvage vessel and equipment.

Asked about the procurement, the CPA member said they had no specially designed or self-propelled salvage vessel. Usually the salvage equipment is installed on a floating platform, which is powered by tagboats.

Meanwhile, the four-member probe committee headed by Chief Ship Surveyor Sirajul Islam of Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) has completed its investigation into the accident. The report will be submitted to the Principal Officer of MMD Sunday.

Sources said Seven Circles-25, which is an inland vessel, was procured in 2008. Its operation at sea might have caused the accident.

Army officer

FROM PAGE 16

Habibul, a village kabiraj, and found the decomposed body of Batan digging a floor of the house.

Habibul and his family left the house three days ago and went into hiding.

ASP Lichi Prue said Batan, hailed from Anwara in Chittagong, was posted at the Dhaka Cantonment.

BCL, JCD

FROM PAGE 16

But Wednesday was the last day of submitting papers of the students to the National University. The admission process was postponed due to the clash," said Prof Md Salek, convener of the admission committee.

He said 330 seats will remain vacant in 15 departments of the college this year.

Speaking at a press conference Friday noon, BCL Pabna district unit secretary Mostak Ahmed Azad blamed the rival BCL group for admission business.

Separate cases have been filed with Pabna police station in connection with the factional clashes of BCL on the campus.

MPs' discretionary

FROM PAGE 1

In 1992 the government however exercised the authority that was vested in the committee, and imposed a set of conditions on the expenditure from the fund, although it did not have the jurisdiction to do so, legal experts and officials in the Parliament Secretariat said.

It had the jurisdiction to make rules putting conditions on the spending from annual discretionary grants for the president, the prime minister, ministers, state ministers, and deputy ministers as the law allows the government to do so.

But the erstwhile Parliament Secretariat on February 29, 1992 issued a circular determining conditions and policies for spending from the discretionary grants for lawmakers.

The circular signed by Abul Hashem, the then secretary to the Parliament Secretariat, stated a set of conditions for spending from the lawmakers' discretionary fund, sources in the Parliament Secretariat said.

But section 9 of the act only empowers the committee concerned led by the leader of the House, who is also the prime minister, to impose the conditions and make the policies.

Section 9 deals with formation of the committee.

It says a committee consisting the leader of the House, the finance minister, the law, justice and parliamentary affairs minister, and four other members including ministers to be nominated by the leader of the House, may make the rules by notification through official gazettes.

Contacted by The Daily

Star, a number of senior officials in the Parliament Secretariat said they did not have any information about the formation of any such committee.

Asked about the spending from the fund, former comptroller and auditor general (CAG) M Hafizuddin Khan said the conditions imposed by the executive order runs counter to the law.

He said the discretionary grants are not being spent lawfully since the committee is yet to make the rules for the spending.

"The rules must be framed to legitimise the spending," Hafizuddin, also a former adviser to a caretaker government said.

The fifth parliament in 1992 introduced the discretionary fund for lawmakers, amending the Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Allowances) Act. At the beginning, each lawmaker used to get a grant of Tk 75,000 annually, which was increased to Tk 1 lakh in 2003.

The lawmakers of the ninth parliament have been granted Tk 50,000 each, a half of the total amount each of them are supposed to get annually, as they were elected MPs after a half of the current financial year had past, the Parliament Secretariat officials said.

Talking to The Daily Star, eminent lawyer Shaheed Malik said if any body challenges the circular issued by the Parliament Secretariat in the court, it might be declared void.

He said the relevant committee should make the rules as early as possible to replace the circular as the law empowers the committee to make the rules.

Green Crescent

FROM PAGE 16

Bangladesh Bank (BB) head office.

The Manager of Daulatkhan Branch of Uttara Bank Shahidul Islam said he sent a transaction report to the head office of his bank. The head office is supposed to send a copy of the report to the Anti-Money Laundering Department of the Bangladesh Bank (BB).

No legal or punitive measures were taken against the account holders or the NGO despite these transactions breaking the law in 2007.

The BB authorities have, however, recently begun an investigation into the matter and they have already collected some documents from them in this regard, Shahidul said.

The procedures that follows now would require the BAMLCO (branch anti money laundering compliance officer) in charge of the section to enquire of the bank manager and customer to show the cause of these abnormal transactions and to submit documents regarding these foreign funds.

After collecting this information, if the BAMLCO is not satisfied then he will mark the account with a suspicious transaction report (STR) and sent the report to the concerned bank head office directing them to submit a

Bopara powers

FROM PAGE 16

(26) offered good support.

Punjab, losers of two rain-affected games since the IPL extravaganza began last weekend, had 52 runs on the board before losing their first wicket and reached 80-1 by the 10-over "strategy break".

Pietersen deployed seven bowlers, including himself, South African Jacques Kallis and Indian Anil Kumble, but they could not stem the Punjab run flow before a large crowd in the Indian Ocean city.

Kings scored 19 runs off the 16th over to swing the game decisively in their favour and when Royals finally got rid of Bopara, caught by New Zealander Jesse Ryder off the bowling of Kallis, it was far too late.

Only veteran Kumble (1-19) impressed with the ball for a Bangalore team suffering their third loss in four outings as one-wicket Kallis conceded 51 runs in four overs.

Kallis fared much better with the bat, top scoring for Royals with a 62 that included two sixes and five fours, New Zealander Ross Taylor contributed 35 and compatriot Ryder got among the runs with a brisk 32 after two ducks.

Little known South African Yusuf Abdulla (4-31) and Irfan Pathan (3-35) took the bowling honours for Punjab, who were watched by co-owner and Bollywood star Preity Zinta.

detailed transaction profile to BB.

If the chief anti-money laundering compliance officer (CAMLCO) of the concerned bank head offices find any abnormal transaction in any account then he has to inform it to the money laundering department (HO) of, Bangladesh Bank, as per rules and directions.

Then BB money laundering department then asks the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) to lodge a case under the Anti-money Laundering Act 2008 if the allegation proved in a primary investigation.

Following the arms and ammo haul from Green Crescent madrasa in Ramkeshob village last month, probes by different departments has been collecting facts about the operation of the NGO.

Green Crescent, during its registration with the Department of Social Services in Doulatkhan upazila in 1999 did not declare in its charter anything about operating a madrasa or running an orphanage.

22 arrestees

FROM PAGE 16

under section 54 of Criminal Procedure Code.

The chief judicial magistrate refusing their bail petition sent eight minors to safe home and rest of the suspects to jail.

The accused minors are Salma Akhter, 15, Tania Akhter, 16, Marzina Akhter, 12, Khadiza Akhter, 17, Rahima, 9, Shahida Khatun, 16, Nur Banu Khan, 14 and Mohsina, 14.

Ctg chemical

FROM PAGE 1

Chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) ABM Khorsheed Alam chaired the discussion.

Shipping Minister Afsarul Amin, lawmakers Mainuddin Khan Badal, ABM Abul Kashem and MA Latif were present as special guests.

Terming the reopening of the lone state-owned chemical plant a notable step in fulfilling government's electoral pledge the minister said the government would take steps to reopen other closed industries as part of its initiative to expand industrialisation.

He hoped that the industry would be a profit-making plant once again with the hard work of workers and officials since there remains huge demand for its two major chemical products -- caustic soda and liquid chlorine -- in the local market.

He blamed the then four-party government for closing the plant leaving its 75 officials, 95 staffs and 258 workers jobless.

Lawmaker Mainuddin Khan Badal urged the industries minister to investigate the reason behind shutting down of the industry by the then BNP-Jamaat government.

China's help

FROM PAGE 1

Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao about the assistance along with four other projects.

He also talked to key government officials of China's Yunnan Province on April 23 since China is interested in setting up railway network between Kunming City in Yunnan Province and Chittagong via Myanmar.

Talking to The Daily Star, the minister said, "I hope to receive a positive response from the Chinese government in this regard."

Abul Hossain said if the project is implemented, Bangladesh will first get connected to Myanmar which has to construct a railway tunnel through its hilly areas to get linked with Kunming in China.

As part of the TAR agreement that Bangladesh signed on November 10, 2007, a railway track will be laid from Dohazari to Gundum in the Arakan state of Myanmar via Ramu in Cox's Bazar.

The TAR, a project of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), is aimed at creating an integrated freight railway network across Europe and Asia.

The TAR will link Bangladesh with six East Asian countries--Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Singapore--as well as with European countries via Turkey.

It will also connect the country with India at two points. For that, the government will lay a separate rail track through the proposed Padma bridge-1 at Mawa, ministry officials said.

Myanmar has already been working on a railway track in the Arakan state to be linked with Bangladesh, sources said.

Govt won't

FROM PAGE 1

importers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers to act more responsibly," Faruk Khan told reporters at a group photo exhibition in Zainul Gallery of the Fine Arts Faculty of Dhaka University yesterday evening.

The minister called upon consumers to ask retailers why they are charging more than the government-fixed price.

Replying to a query, Faruk Khan said the price of brand soya bean oil should not be more than Tk 4 than the non-brand oil since only Tk 3-4 is spent in bottling and advertising.

He, however, acknowledged the brand soya bean oil price hike and assured all of looking into the matter.

Earlier, he inaugurated the group photo exhibition of three young artists of Fine Arts Faculty. He was the chief guest of the programme where Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique also spoke.

World heritage

FROM PAGE 1

Pramanik said lack of proper maintenance, shortage of manpower, fund constraint, soil salinity and heavy rainfall contributed to the decay of rare terracotta artworks.

"Even the main temple and other artifacts have been eroding day by day due to lack of proper maintenance," he added.

King Dharma Pal made the temple dates back to 770-810 century AD, according to the archeological documents.

Badrul Alam, field officer of Rajshahi Regional Office in Bogra, said the site was declared as the 'World Heritage Site' in 1985.

"As many as 2305 terracotta plaques were found in 2004," said Mahabub-ul-Alam, former custodian of the historical site.

A total of 595 terracotta sculptures of the temple completely eroded due to high salinity of the soil, lack of proper maintenance, heavy rainfall and negligence, said a high official of the department.

At least 1810 rare terracotta figures in the storeroom of the site are now a pile of ruins due to lack of preservation, sources said.

Prominent archeologist Sir Alexander Cunningham submitted a report after his visit to the site and other historical sites in India between 1861-1880. He was later made Director General, Archeological Survey India.

Terracotta artworks depicted images of man, women, flowers, and animals but most of the images have already worn away while some rare terracotta plaques are now shrouded in thick cobwebs.

Thai PM lifts emergency as new protest looms

AFP, Bangkok

Thai Premier Abhisit Vejjajiva Friday lifted a state of emergency imposed in Bangkok after violent protests, but said troops would remain deployed amid opposition plans to take to the streets again.

Abhisit said he had ended 12 days of emergency rule both to show the world that the troubled kingdom was stable and also to foster reconciliation with supporters of ousted former leader Thaksin Shinawatra.

"We will send a signal to the international community that normalcy has been restored," Abhisit said at his offices in Bangkok's Government House, which were at the epicentre of the protests by the pro-Thaksin "Red Shirts".

He declared an emergency in the capital and five surrounding provinces on April 12, a day after demonstrators forced the cancellation of a summit of Asian leaders in the coastal city of Pattaya.

Two people were killed and 123 injured as protesters fought running battles with troops across Bangkok for two days, before finally dispersing on April 14 in the face of a threatened military crackdown.

Tensions also rose a week ago after an assassination attempt in Bangkok on the founder of the anti-Thaksin "Yellow Shirts" movement, Sondhi Limthongkul, who led a crippling blockade of the

capital's airports last year.

Abhisit said he was confident the international community would accept that it was "crucial to maintain troops" in areas where there was still public concern and where police were overstretched.

"Foreigners will understand as they closely monitor the rallies," he said.

Thailand's image as a "Land of Smiles" for tourists has taken a major hit from the recent disturbances, with flag carrier Thai Airways reportedly suffering a 20 percent drop in bookings since the emergency was imposed.

The Red Shirts announced soon after the emergency was lifted that they would rally on Saturday at a central Bangkok park, instead of at a venue they had initially planned outside the capital.

They said they would demand the release of Red Shirt leaders held under emergency laws and the reopening of the movement's radio station, but unlike earlier Bangkok rallies there would be no phone-in from Thaksin himself.

During a parliamentary debate overnight, Abhisit had said he would lift the emergency as part of wider efforts to end the years of political turmoil since Thaksin was ousted in a military coup in 2006.

The Red Shirts want Abhisit to quit and call elections, saying that the Democrat Party leader came to power unfairly in December after a court toppled Thaksin's allies from power.

Symonds stars

FROM PAGE 16

after Pakistan won the first match by four wickets on Wednesday.

As expected, Australia came back strongly as they unleashed tight line and length and then kept their cool while chasing a modest 4.16 run target, avoiding the first match's let-ups against Pakistani spinners.