

## Georgia, Russia stoke fears of new conflict

AFP, Tbilisi

Georgia warned of the risk of a new war with Russia yesterday as Moscow raised the battle-readiness of its forces ahead of the first anniversary of their war over the rebel South Ossetia region.

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili called on the United States and European Union to send a "clear message" to Moscow to help avert a new war, as both sides exchanged accusations of attacks and "provocations" in the region.

"There is a risk. The Russians are exerting constant pressure," Saakashvili told French radio station RTL when asked about the possibility of renewed conflict.

"The latest (Russian military) manoeuvres are worrying. They refuse to respond to calls from European observers and unfortunately the media in Moscow are announcing a situation of imminent conflict," he said.

"Despite all that, I am confident that Europe and the United States will send a clear message" to Moscow, he said.

The Russian foreign ministry meanwhile said its forces had heightened their state of battle-readiness in South Ossetia.

"The situation is very worrying and the Georgian provocations ahead of the anniversary of last year's war are not halting," foreign ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko said in a statement.

"In connection with this, the battle-readiness of Russian troops and border guards stationed in South Ossetia has been heightened," he said.

Tensions have been rising in recent days between the two countries as they prepare to mark the one-year anniversary on August 7 of the outbreak of their five-day war over the breakaway Georgian region of South Ossetia.

"At the moment, the main thing is not to allow an escalation and development of the shootings into a more serious clash. We are doing and will do everything to avoid this," said Nesterenko.

Russia earlier Tuesday accused Georgia of preparing a series of "provocations" on

its de-facto border with South Ossetia, as both sides traded accusations of carrying out grenade and mortar attacks.

Russian deputy foreign minister Grigory Karasin also angrily accused the US of arming the Georgian military.

Washington is "playing the main role in re-equipping the Georgian war machine," he told the Interfax news agency in an interview.

The Russian defence ministry warned at the weekend in a startling statement that the military reserved the right to hit back with force if Tbilisi continued carrying out "provocations" in the area.

South Ossetia's defence ministry said Tuesday that the border village of Ortev had come under fire from three mortar rounds late Monday but that there had been no reports of casualties.

"The South Ossetian side did not respond to the provocation and did not open fire," the ministry said in a statement posted on the rebel government's website.

Georgia had earlier accused South Ossetian forces of firing three rocket-propelled grenades at a Georgian police checkpoint near the border late Tuesday. No one was reported injured.

The alleged attacks followed frequent reports of ceasefire violations over the last week and a call from the EU for all sides to show restraint as the anniversary of the war approaches.

South Ossetia's rebel leader, Eduard Kokoity, said Monday that Russian soldiers had started exercises in South Ossetia, after Georgia on Sunday accused Russian forces of entering a Georgian-controlled village in an attempt to shift the border with South Ossetia.

The war erupted last year when an attempt by Georgian troops to retake South Ossetia was rebuffed by Russia. Moscow then sent troops and tanks deep into Georgian territory.

After the war, Russian forces mostly withdrew into South Ossetia and another breakaway Georgian region, Abkhazia but Moscow then infuriated the West by recognising both regions as independent.

## Mother, 2 kids

FROM PAGE 16

Officer in charge of Bhagura Police Station MA Mannan confirmed the incident.

Meanwhile, the local sources said Kulsum was often tortured in her house, and had bitter relations with her husband.

## JS team

FROM PAGE 1

standing committee on water resources ministry.

The lawmaker said they will analyse the data they collected from India and check if India's Tipaimukh project, 210 kilometres off Bangladesh border, has any impact on Bangladesh.

"We will seek more information,"

"The Indian minister said they were friend of Bangladesh in the past, are a good friend now and will be so in future too," he said.

Asked why the delegation went to India knowing that it is rainy season, Razzaq said, "This was more because of political pressure. It is we who fixed the schedule for the visit, not India."

Awami League MPs Abdur Rahman and AKM Fazlul Haq and independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology professor Monwar Hossain, Sajjad Hossain of Bangladesh-India Joint Rivers Commission, Water Resources Secretary Waheeduzzaman and Foreign Ministry Director General Emran Ahmed were also in the team.

BNP did not name any MP for the delegation, while Jamaat-e-Islami MP Hamidur Rahman Azad did not join the delegation at the last moment as he fell ill.

BNP had earlier termed the delegation's visit to India a "picnic". Party leader Hafiz Uddin, however, later lauded the delegation when it sought data from India.

## BSF kills

FROM PAGE 1

the bodies to Indian territory.

Officials of 39 Rifles Battalion sent a letter to their Indian counterpart protesting the killing and demanding the bodies back. However, BSF said they would hand the bodies over to BDR after maintaining proper formalities, sources said.

BDR officials said BSF returned the bodies at 8:00pm after a commander-level flag meeting at Telkupi boarder. BDR handed the bodies over to their relatives.

A tense situation is prevailing in the area.

## Digital database

FROM PAGE 16

people in all 70 courts—64 district courts and six metropolitan courts—to record all the cases which are under trial or trial of which has been completed, sources in the CID said.

More than 120 forms used in court, including general register, property register, daily under trial register, appeal register, sessions court register, bail bond register and jail register will be fully digitised under the project.

This will reduce the workload of case investigators and court staffers, the CID officials said.

The CID also expects that it will bring an overall change in the court activities.

Asked about the database, CID Deputy Inspector General Saiful Alam said, "This criminal database will really help us a lot."

## WB

FROM PAGE 16

million a year on an average.

The WB wants to provide assistance for power, water resources, education and health sectors and safety net programmes, Muhit said. "I have requested them (WB) to increase budget support."

Asked about funds for the proposed Padma Bridge, the minister said the WB emphasises development of the southern region.

On the government's changed position on procurement regulation, and on banking and SOE (state-owned enterprises) sectors, he said, "They (WB) have supported the changes."

Muhit went on, "Our policy is to give scope to fresh hands. But we will not allow new entrepreneurs for jobs requiring Tk 100 crore. They can be awarded deals involving Tk 10 lakh to Tk 2 crore." Earlier, the WB had an impression that provisions have been made to award deals to ruling party loyalists, but in reality that is not the case, he said.

## Zia murals

FROM PAGE 16

Witnesses said one of the mosaics was removed from the stands on the northern side, near the Baitul Mukarram Mosque, while another one from the VIP Gate on the southern end. The third one was removed from the second floor of the stadium.

Many shop owners at the stadium market said it seemed that the mosaics were removed with drills during the night.

The mosaics of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were untouched. A large contingent of additional police was deployed in the stadium area yesterday after the mosaics were removed.

Even though additional police were deployed there, Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police AKM Shahidul Hoque said he was unaware of the incident. "No body filed any complaint with us about the matter. If we receive any complaint, we will investigate the incident," he told The Daily Star.

Talking to The Daily Star, National Sports Council Deputy Director (admin) Ruhul Amin Hawlader said he had heard about the removal of the mosaics and had also watched a news report on television. He, however, could not say whether it was the sports council's decision.

"The NSC secretary and other senior officials might know about it," he said.

Neither the state minister for sports nor the NSC secretary was available for making comments on the matter.

BNP Secretary General Khondaker Delwar Hossain yesterday condemned the incident and termed it an example of the autocratic attitude of the Awami League government.

Delwar said, "They are damaging the mosaics only to erase the name of Zia and Khaleda Zia from our history."

While talking to reporters at BNP's central office in Naya Paltan, he said with instigation

of the government the mosaics were smashed.

"The government cannot avoid the responsibility," he said.

Dhaka National Stadium was renamed Bangabandhu National Stadium in 1997 when Awami League was in power. The mosaics of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman were installed there in 2003, after BNP assumed power in 2001.

In April, the Khaleda Zia Hall of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College was renamed Bibi Ayesha Hall.

In 2006, newly established medical college in the Suhrawardi Hospital compound at Sher-e-Banglanagar was named after Khaleda Zia. A couple of months ago it was renamed Suhrawardi Medical College.

Our correspondent in Dinajpur reports: Some unidentified miscreants vandalised the foundation stone of the under-construction building of Dinajpur Medical College Hospital Monday evening.

The caretakers of the building, Masud and Rubel, who also witnessed the incident, told The Daily Star that eight to 10 people equipped with hammers vandalised the foundation stone around 7:30pm.

When they tried to resist, the miscreants assaulted them, they claimed.

Shah Abdul Ahad, director of Dinajpur Medical College, declined to comment on the matter.

On October 28, 2000 Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the construction work of the Medical College Hospital by laying a foundation stone. Late minister Khurshid Jahan Haque, elder sister of Khaleda Zia, on August 27, 2004 replaced the foundation stone with another one with her name on it.

Khaleda Zia about three years ago inaugurated the building, even though it was under construction then.

The building is yet to become operational.

## Swine flu

FROM PAGE 1

"As her condition even worsened and both the lungs were affected, the hospital authorities realised that it was not a normal case of flu. But by that time, it was too late. It was too late for the Tamiflu medication," Azad said adding had the test done on time and drug given, "the life could have been saved."

A statement of Indian health ministry last night said the deterioration in the girl's condition led to her multi organs failure.

However, the hospital authorities in Pune claimed that the girl had no history of foreign tour nor any contact with a person afflicted with swine flu.

Seven more people tested positive for the flu Monday, taking the total number of cases to 558 in India. Of these, 470 patients have been discharged after treatment. About 2,479 people have been tested so far.

Meanwhile, two new cases of swine flu were detected here yesterday raising the toll of infected to 32 in the country, government sources confirmed.

At a discussion on "Pandemic Influenza: Media Coverage" at a city hotel Prof Mahmudur Rahman, director of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) said of the infected 28 people have already been discharged by this time.

## DU unrest 2007

FROM PAGE 1

A presidential pardon the same day however saw the three released.

Judge Mohammad Abul Bashar of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order overturning the lower court's decisions at a packed courtroom yesterday afternoon.

The teachers' counsels Abdul Mannan Khan and Masud Ahmed Talukder expressed satisfaction over the ruling.

The three filed appeals against their convictions on February 25 last year.

Their lawyers argued the president's pardon meant their clients won't have to serve the sentences. As it did not exonerate them of the charges, their convictions still stood.

They said the teachers would be ineligible to contest any election if their convictions were not quashed.

On August 20, 2007, thousands of DU students took to the streets to protest the beatings of three students by army personnel on campus.

Their demonstrations for withdrawal of the army camp from DU and an apology from the troops continued for a

Talking about global scenario and preparedness of Bangladesh he also said more than 161 countries have confirmed swine flu cases and some 816 people died since July 27, 2009.

"India confirmed a death from swine flu yesterday," he said, adding that as April-June is the flu season, people should be careful and ensure personal hygiene during the time.

He said the government had directed to distribute health screening card to the airlines so that no passenger infected with swine flu or having the flu symptoms can enter the country undetected.

"But eight to 10 airlines are yet to introduce the health screening card. Hence a technical meeting will be held at the office of the director general of health services soon," said Prof Rahman, adding though Bangladesh is doing well in containing swine flu and has taken various measures, in no way we can neglect the situation. Expectant mothers, people with co-morbid situation and obese are the high-risk group, he continued.

It is absolute to maintain personal hygiene, especially washing hands with soap, said Carel De Rooy, Unicef representative in Bangladesh. The experts at the discussion, organised by Unicef, also sought media cooperation to overcome people's panic and clarify confusions.

## Ashraf

FROM PAGE 1  
and UNDP.

Citing examples of America, Ashraf said, "Only a few countries in the world, including some of our neighbouring countries, have a five-year-long tenure for parliament."

At the inaugural ceremony the LGRD minister expressed hope that under the project with a tenure up to December 2013 they would be able to build the local government bodies in a way that no military rule can use them for political purpose.

He said military rulers in 1958 and during 1975-1991 used the local government bodies, especially the upazila parishads, to perpetuate their illegitimate rules.

He said the government is closely observing the functioning of upazila parishads and will bring necessary changes after a year. "If needed, we will change the law to build a strong and independent local government," the minister said.

On his preference for the jury system, Ashraf later told reporters, "Judgment by a single judge cannot be safe in any country."

It would be a better and safe judicial system if there were at least three judges, a magistrate and two justices of peace to prepare the verdict in a trial, he said.

He also said it would be revolutionary for the judicial system of the country if the village courts were run properly on the basis of the Village Courts Act 2006.

LGRD State Minister Jahangir Kabir Nanak said the project will build the capacity of the local government representatives and community members, especially women, for improving access to justice for disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

Abul Kalam Azad, joint secretary (administration) and national project director of the project, said the \$14,986 million scheme jointly funded by the government, the European Commission and UNDP would be implemented in 500 union parishads.

Monzur Hossain, LGRD secretary, Robert Juhkam, resident representatives (ai) of UNDP Bangladesh, and Dr Jean-Jacques Lature of the European Commission delegation to Bangladesh also spoke at the inaugural ceremony.

## New pay scale

FROM PAGE 16

"There is no probability of sending the pay scale to the cabinet meeting this month. Before going to the cabinet, it would come to me for approval. I have not yet received it," he said.

The finance minister said more time is required to review the pay commission report, the secretaries committee report and defence pay scale report as there are many important issues for consideration.

He said the government staff would get their increased salaries from July whenever the pay scale is implemented.

Finance ministry sources said the committee led by the cabinet secretary has finalised their report on the pay scale. But prices of essentials go up in the market as soon as the pay scale is announced.

Prices of many commodities are showing upward trend. The month of Ramadan begins at the end of August. If the pay scale is announced at this time, prices of essentials will rise throughout the country. So the pay scale is likely to be implemented around October, sources said.

## Army officer

FROM PAGE 16

from their vehicle and got into the army officer's carat gun point, police said adding that two of the miscreants kept him at the back seat of his car while the other took control of the steering.

When they reached Khamarbari at Manik Mia Avenue, the thugs ejected him from his vehicle, received another cohort who was waiting for them, in the car and left the scene by the hijacked car.

They also took away Tk 4,000 and one cellphone set from the army man, police said.

Ahmed filed a case with Pallabi Police Station in this connection.

About the mugger's car, OC Mohammad Abdul Malek of the police station said quoting the case statement that all the three snatchers took part in the mugging leaving their car.

While contacted over telephone, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said they were not informed of the incident.

## Saudi may shut TV offices over 'sex' talk show: report

AFP, Riyadh

The Saudi offices of a Lebanon-based satellite station controlled by tycoon Prince Alwaleed bin Talal could face closure over a racy talk show featuring a man boasting about his sex life, a newspaper reported yesterday.

The local operations of the Saudi billionaire's broadcaster LBC could be shut down because of the "offensive nature" of the programme, Abdullah al-Othaim, a senior district judge in Jeddah, told the pan-Arab Asharq Al-Awsat.

Contacted by AFP, LBC chief executive Pierre Daher said the company had decided not to comment publicly on the controversy.

Jeddah investigators continued to examine evidence to see what charges would be filed against Saudi citizen Mazen Abdul-Jawad, whose discussion of his sex life on LBC's "Bold Red Line" in July led to his arrest on Friday.

Two other men who took part in the programme were also arrested, while a fourth fled to Morocco, local newspapers cited Saudi police as saying.

Abdul-Jawad's confessions — that he first had sex at 14 with a neighbour, used sex aids and liked to use his cellphone's Bluetooth function to try to pick up women — outraged Saudi conservatives.

His actions allegedly violated strict Islamic sharia law, the basis of the Saudi legal system, media reports said.

Jeddah police spokesman Suleiman al-Mutawae told AFP on Sunday that it could take time to determine the charges against Abdul-Jawad, a Saudi Airlines employee thought to be in his 30s, because there was no legal precedent.

## 19 officers

FROM PAGE 1

Majumder, Hedayetullah Al Mamun, Kamrun Nesa Khanam, Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, Md Mozammel Haq Khan, Md Abul Kalam Azad, Manzur Hossain, Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury and Mahbub Ahmed.

Sources at the establishment ministry said the promoted officers would be given appointment at different ministries soon.

## Australia foils plot

FROM PAGE 16

with automatic weapons.

"The alleged offenders were prepared to inflict a sustained attack on military personnel until they themselves were killed," said Tony Negus, acting chief commissioner of the Australian Federal Police.

"The men's intention was to go into these army barracks and to kill as many people as possible... This would have been, if it had been able to be carried out, the most serious attack on Australian soil," he added.

Police said the men, aged in their twenties, had links with Somalia's Shebab Islamists and members of the group had previously travelled to the anarchic African nation to fight in the insurgency there.

Nayef El Sayed, 25, appeared in court charged with helping prepare an armed attack on the Holsworthy army base in western Sydney.

Prosecutors asked for further time to interview the other three men arrested, while a fifth man detained earlier was also being questioned.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said the arrests were a chastening reminder of the threat of terrorism but refused to contemplate withdrawing Australia's 1,550 troops from Afghanistan.

"The sobering element of today's development is the reminder to all Australians that the threat of terrorism is alive and well, and this requires continued vigilance on the part of our security authorities," Rudd said.

New South Wales police commissioner Andrew Scipione, whose jurisdiction includes the Holsworthy base, said the attack was believed to be imminent.

"I'm not sure of the timing other than to say that it was likely imminent," he told reporters. "That was part of

A five-minute clip from the show on Youtube, viewed more than 430,000 times but now blocked by the government censor, has sparked intense criticism from conservatives on Saudi Internet sites and triggered calls for government action.

It shows a casually dressed Abdul-Jawad sitting in an apartment talking about his sexual activities. He has since apologised in interviews with local papers, accusing the show's producers of breaking a pledge to mask his face.

It was not clear whether Abdul-Jawad was filmed in Saudi Arabia or Lebanon.

The case has focused attention on LBC, which broadcasts across the Arab world and hosts one of the most popular regional programmes, the music contest and reality show "Star Academy."

Through LBC and his regional entertainment company Rotana, Alwaleed has pushed hard to break down Saudi Arabia's tough bans on cinemas and popular music concerts and its taboos on salacious or non-Islamic television content.

But he has come under stiff opposition from conservatives. In July, the first ever Jeddah Film Festival, sponsored by Rotana, was cancelled the day before it opened because of pressure from fundamentalist clerics.

That move temporarily forced Rotana to shelve plans to begin showing films publicly inside the kingdom.

## Militancy

FROM PAGE 16

of law enforcers to improve law and order in the country.

Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad and Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque also spoke at the function with Tejgaon zone Deputy Commissioner of Police Chowdhury Manjurul Kabir in the chair.

IGP Nur Mohammad said the traffic signal fails to stop vehicles. Unless the traffic police stand in front of vehicles, they don't stop.

While talking about the existing traffic jam, the IGP said, "We have heard about removals of old vehicles from the roads for years. But it is not being implemented. Rather a huge number of new vehicles are seen on the streets everyday."

the reasoning behind in moving like we have."

Negus said a core group of some 150 police had been investigating the planned attack since January in a "massive physical and electronic surveillance operation."

He added that the group had been seeking a "Fatwa", or religious edict, to justify its actions, without giving further details.

"Police will allege that the men were planning to carry out a suicide terrorist attack on a defence establishment within Australia involving an armed assault with automatic weapons," Negus said.

Police said the group had also been spotted carrying out surveillance at military sites other than the sprawling Holsworthy base on Sydney's outskirts, which is home to thousands of troops including an anti-extremism unit.

The arrests come after Australian Islamic convert Shane Kent last week admitted plotting to kill thousands of people in an attack on a major sports event in Melbourne.

Eight members of Kent's extremist cell have already been jailed over plans to bomb the 2005 Australian Football League Grand Final in Australia's biggest anti-terrorism trial.

Remy Ven de Wiel, defending ringleader Abdul Nacer Benbrika, had argued the self-styled sheikh "couldn't organise a booze-up in a brewery."

Australia, which was also involved in the Iraq war, has never been hit by Islamic extremists on its own soil, although four people died in bombings at the Hilton hotel in Sydney and Melbourne's Turkish consulate in 1978 and 1986.

It has also lost lives in attacks abroad, including 92 on Indonesia's resort island of Bali in 2002 and 2005 and three in last month's Jakarta hotel blasts.

## Anwar denies

FROM PAGE 16

always been clear as you will see it time and again. We did not, and we do not, interfere into the internal dynamics of Bangladesh."

Choudhury said his position was always transparent and that was to support a democratic, stable and prosperous Bangladesh. "That is exactly what we have been doing... We supported the voter list, supported a roadmap to a safe, free and fair election. So, I can't really see why the accusation should be there," he said.

Chowdhury, who escaped a grenade attack in Sylhet in 2004, also said, "We are a good friend of this country and we have always been so. This is an independent country that makes its own decision."

Asked what led Bangladesh to a situation like 1/11, he said, "You as the media witnessed it. Leading up to the declaration of emergency was a lot of violence. People were dying in the streets. There were a lot of opinions about whether the election could be held and be free and