

Govt mobilises

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Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles were kept on high alert yesterday along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

"Myanmar troops intruded into Bangladesh territory several times which is a serious threat to country's security," said an armed forces division report submitted to the government with its recommendations.

A group of Myanmar troops from engineering corps of its Medaik camp trespassed into Bangladesh territory to gather information about Bangladesh on September 29, the report said, adding that after the intrusion Bangladesh army was put on high alert there.

In recent years and months, Myanmar authorities have constructed new roads, military war obstacles including bunkers along the borders, renovated a nearby airport and started fencing the border as part of its provocative activities.

Myanmar has already constructed 42-kilometre long road and 9-kilometre war obstacles for its troops and set up concrete pillars on a 10-kilometre area along the border.

Bangladesh has protested Myanmar's such provocative acts time and again but the military junta did not pay any heed, sources in the foreign ministry told The Daily Star.

Sources said the Myanmar junta had renovated and expanded Sittwe Airport known as Arakan Airport and started flying aircraft for military exercise from there two to three days back which also increased tension on the Bangladesh side.

They added that the airport had remained abandoned for military aircrafts since the Second World War and a few small civil aircrafts used to fly from it.

"Myanmar has been mak-

ing all-out preparations keeping in view Bangladesh," said a senior government official not authorised to talk to media.

Foreign ministry officials said Bangladesh has repeatedly requested Myanmar authorities to stop such provocations but they showed no restraint.

Following fresh tension, an army brigade has been moved to Fashikhali of Ramu to closely monitor the activities of Myanmar troops. Police, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Ansar members were also increased in the bordering region over the past few days.

Extra soldiers were also deployed in some bordering upazilas of Khagrachari, Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts," Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the government is seriously concerned over the recent events on the border.

Our Bandarban correspondent Monirul Islam Monu adds: Bangladesh troops have been kept on high alert at Naikhongchhari upazila in Bandarban and Hnila and Damdama in Cox's Bazar district bordering Myanmar after the fresh tension.

Different unconfirmed sources said, in recent times 13 fighter planes were positioned at Sittwe Airport and 12 war ships anchored in the two rivers of Myanmar.

In November last year, Myanmar warships entered into Bangladesh maritime boundary to guard its exploration vessels, fomenting enormous tension between the two countries as both the countries mobilised their troops on the borders.

Myanmar had to withdraw the warships and the oil and gas exploration rigs as Bangladesh initiated both bilateral and international negotiations to resolve the crisis peacefully.

ACC probing

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current ward commissioner of Khilgaon ABM Enamul Haque Qayum brought the allegation against him.

Mirza Abbas is accused of abuse of power in purchasing shares worth Tk 5 crore from BTCL. The allegation said Mirza Abbas purchased the shares in the names of different individuals at Tk 2.5 crore against its real value of Tk 5 crore.

A former BTCL chairman lodged the complaint against him.

ACC sources, however, said none of the allegations can be proved against anyone as the allegations are unlikely to be substantiated with evidence. MK Anwar stands accused in at least two ACC cases while Mirza Abbas in two cases including one on charge of amassing wealth by illegal means.

August 21

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the grenades used in the attack, the IO said.

IO Akond added Pintu needs to be remanded to identify those who had supplied the Arges grenades to the Huji members.

CID produced Pintu and Huji member Maulana Abu Taher before court on completion of their three-day remand. They sought further seven-day remand only to interrogate Pintu.

But Metropolitan Magistrate Syeda Minhaz Um Munira fixed October 11 for hearing on the remand prayer, as the prosecution failed to place case diary yesterday.

The court also ordered to send the two arrestees to the Dhaka Central Jail and directed the jail authorities to produce Pintu before the court on scheduled date.

On August 3, a Dhaka court ordered further investigation into the August 21 attack stating the probe conducted earlier could not identify the collectors and suppliers of the grenades.

The CID, which misdirected the investigation during BNP-led government, finally pressed charges in June last year accusing Pintu and 21 Huji members including its top leader Mifti Abdul Haman.

The eight absconding accused in the case are Pintu's brothers Tajuddin and Maulana Liton, Anisul Mursalin and his brother Mahibul Muttakin, Iqbal, Maulana Abu Bakar alias Selim Howlader, Jahangir Alam Badar and Khalilur Rahman.

BTRC serves

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seven days for publishing false, fabricated, baseless and politically ill-motivated news.

BTRC, through its lawyer, issued the notice on the newspaper's publisher, editor-in-charge, chief reporter and reporter concerned for publishing two news items headlined 'BTRC under Indian's grip' and 'The state security will be threatened' on October 2 and 3 respectively, said a press release.

The reports defamed BTRC as well as the government said the release, adding criminal and civil legal action would be taken against them on their failure.

It said the Amar Desh alleged that the BTRC employed Indian nationals in sensitive posts of BTRC, so to divulge state secrets to the Indian government, which is an old trick to terrify people in the name of 'Indian Terror'.

It also said the fact remains that BTRC does not employ any foreign national as its employee.

To justify their point, the newspaper named five Indian citizens as BTRC's employees and also claimed that the said Indians are still in the service of BTRC which is an utter lie as the said Indians were working under a World Bank Project not with BTRC, the release said.

The scope of work of the said citizens was very limited and they had already left the country after completing their assignment, it said adding the citizens had no access to any sensitive and secret information of BTRC.

In reply to another question, Shahidul Hoque said over five lakh illegal rickshaws run on the city roads and 4,000 of them had been seized and dumped.

The DMP commissioner said they cannot get tough on illegal rickshaws right now because of humanitarian reason as well as public demand for rickshaws.

"But we are trying to stop them using the non-motorised transport free roads," he added.

The legal notice was served on editor-in-charge Mahmudur Rahman, publisher Al Haj Md Hasmat Ali, chief reporter and reporter Oliullah Norman.

NEWS

Car bomb strikes

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Sept. 17, when a suicide bomber killed 16 people, including six Italian soldiers and 10 Afghan civilians, on a road in the centre of the capital.

President Hamid Karzai, the US Embassy and the United Nations mission all condemned the blast.

After months of relative calm, the Afghan capital has been shaken recently by an increasing number of suicide attacks and roadside bombings, which began in the run-up to the country's disputed Aug. 20 election. The attacks usually target international military forces or government installations, but Afghan businesses and civilians are also often killed or injured.

The Taliban did not say why it targeted the Indian Embassy but the attack is likely to raise questions about a link to Pakistan, India's archrival.

Extremist groups once supported by Pakistan's intelligence service have struck at Indian targets for years, and the two countries are competing for influence among different ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

A suicide attack against the Indian Embassy on July 7, 2008, killed more than 60 people. The road in front of the embassy has been barricaded since then.

The Indian news channel CNN-IBN cited Jayant Prasad, India's ambassador to Kabul, as saying Thursday's blast caused "extensive damage to the chancery." He said the bomb was so powerful that it blew off the some of the embassy's doors and windows.

In Islamabad, Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesman, Abdur Basit, condemned the bombing.

"Whenever terrorist activity occurs it should strengthen our resolve to eradicate and eliminate this menace," he said.

The blast also damaged a line of shops between the embassy and the Interior Ministry, shattering glass and rattling buildings more than a mile (kilometre) away. A huge brown plume of smoke was visible in the air as ambulances raced to the scene and carried away the wounded.

A European police officer

BNP not against

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BNP's central office at Naya Paltan.

Protect Oil, Gas, Power and Port is not a political party. We support their hartial programme as they called it to protect the country's interest," Delwarsaid.

On the prime minister's comment on the Asian Highway, he said the BNP also wants the country to be linked with the Asian Highway but the AL government is trying to give India a corridor.

"They [the government] have proposed a route from India to India via Chittagong Port, but we had proposed a route from Myanmar to India through Bangladesh," he said.

BNP leaders Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, Mirza Abbas, Shamsuzzaman Dudu and Md Shahjahan, among others, were present at the briefing.

Dhaka to seek

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notification of arbitration and statement of claim.

The statement on the invitation for arbitration reads, "The claims of our neighbours have unfairly cut off a significant portion of our maritime area in the Bay of Bengal and prevented us from exploring and exploiting oil and natural gas resources."

"The time has come to settle the disputed boundary so that both Bangladesh and its neighbours can finally resolve this obstacle that stands in the way of exploitation of our natural resources."

Bangladesh's decision comes in the wake of its neighbours' laying claim to the three blocks it wants to be explored for oil and gas.

Now that notification and statement of claim have been issued, a tribunal will be constituted in line with the UNCLOS principles and rules.

The country suffers from a scarcity of resources despite huge deposits of marine assets in the Bay. It needs urgent delimitation of maritime boundary to exploit the resources, observed the foreign minister.

She said things will get even worse if the matter takes more time to be settled.

Dipu Moni said she hopes the arbitration move will speed up the negotiations with India and Myanmar.

"There will be no need for arbitration if we can by that time settle the issue at the negotiating table," she said, adding that Bangladesh has

Lawmaker

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expressed surprise over the allegation of reported land grabbing," he said.

He further claimed none of his two sons were present at the spot and no incident of violence took place there.

Asked about the attack on newsmen he said some outsiders might have done that.

"As the MP of the area I regret the attack on the journalists and hope the attackers would be brought to justice," he said.

Rashed Mahmud, a senior photo journalist of the Prothom Alo, filed the case with Sitakunda Police Station on Wednesday night against 20 persons including SM Al-Mamun and SM Al-Noman, sons of Abdul Kashem, lawmaker of Chittagong-3 constituency, on charge of attack on journalists.

Sirajul Doula, proprietor of Pakjia Enterprise, yesterday lodged four general diaries with the chief metropolitan magistrate's court, local police station and office of assistant superintendent of police (Sitakunda Circle) seeking justice to get back his 'grabbed land'.

None has been arrested so far in this connection.

When asked Officer-in-charge (OC) Nazrul Islam of Sitakunda Police Station said they were continuing drive to nab the accused.

"None of those involved in assaulting journalists would be spared," the OC asserted.

"However, the matter of reported land grabbing would have to be solved after examining documents of all the sides," he said.

UNB reports: State Minister for Home Affairs advocate Shamsul Haq Tuku on Thursday said legal actions would be taken against land grabbers, no matter who they are.

While talking to reporters after a meeting with Home Minister Sahara Khatun at her ministry office Tuku said a legal process is underway to take action against the land grabbers in Sitakunda.

"No land grabbers will be spared," he warned.

On Wednesday some 200 men of the MP's son appeared on the 10 acres of land of ship-breaking yards owned by Pakjia Enterprise, Asad Ship Cutting, Moslema Steel and Prime Steel in Kumira around 7:00am on Wednesday and allegedly grabbed the lands attaching them to the lawmaker's under-construction ship-breaking yard along the coast at Jora Amtal of Kumira under the upazila.

Protect Turag

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The HC bench came up with the directives upon a petition filed by advocate Manzil Murshid on behalf of rights organisation Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB). The court fixed October 26 for further order on the matter.

During hearing of the petition, Murshid told the court that earlier in June the HC in a verdict directed the authorities concerned to protect the Turag, Balu, Shitalakhya and Buriganga from encroachment.

Copies of the judgement were sent to the authorities and the media reported it extensively, he said, but it has been reported in different newspapers that the land grabbers are continuing filling parts of the Turag and Buriganga.

He prayed to the court to direct the authorities again to take action against the encroachers and stop illegal earth-filling there.

Earlier this year, the HC in separate orders directed the government to demarcate the original territories of the Buriganga, Turag, Balu, and Shitalakhya through a survey to restore the rivers to their original conditions.

The differences with the neighbours are resolved, it will establish Bangladesh's rights to the natural resources. It will help the country move forward to an era of prosperity, it further adds.

Recently, the government has endorsed leasing out blocks 5, 10 and 11 to ConocoPhillips and Tullow Oil plc for offshore oil and gas exploration.

ConocoPhillips, the third largest US energy company, will get deep-sea blocks 10 and 11. Irish company Tullow, which has already been working on Bhanga gas field here, will get Shallow-sea blocks 5.

With around 15 trillion cubic feet (425 billion cubic metres) of proven and recoverable gas reserves, the country currently faces a shortage of around 100 million cubic feet gas a day.

Dipu Moni said the arbitration bid will mean no harm to the friendly relations with the two neighbours.

Asked if it will create problem for the oil and gas exploration companies, she said their operations will be confined to the undisputed waters.

Each of the 16 rapists and accomplices was fined Tk 10,000 and then released. The victim's family was provided with the money on condition that they would not seek any legal recourse.

German author

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poetry and the frankness of prose, depicts the landscape of the dispossessed."

Mueller was born in a German-speaking region of Romania and fled the country two years before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. She has been a longstanding candidate for the award, which comes just ahead of the 20th anniversary of the collapse of communism.

The grim daily life under Ceausescu's oppressive regime and the harsh treatment of Romanian Germans has featured strongly in her works. Corruption, intolerance and repression are also major themes in her writing.

Mueller was born on August 17, 1953 in western Romania in 1953 to parents of the German-speaking minority. Her father was in the Nazi SS during World War II and the Romanian communists deported her mother to a labour camp in Soviet Ukraine after the war.

She said Romania had developed "collective amnesia" over its repressive past.

"They're pretending that it disappeared into thin air, the whole country is afflicted by collective amnesia. Even though it was home to the most abstruse dictatorship in eastern Europe and after Stalin, the most evil dictator, with a personal cult to rival North Korea's," she wrote.

Mueller follows French author Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio in winning the Nobel diploma, medal and 10 million kroner (1.42 million dollars/980,000 euros). In 2007 it went to Doris Lessing of Britain.

After the main science awards this week, the Peace Prize will be announced on Friday, and the Economics Prize will wrap up the awards on Monday, October 12.

The formal prize ceremony in Stockholm and Oslo will be held as tradition dictates on December 10, the anniversary of the death in 1896 of the prize's creator, Swedish industrialist and inventor of dynamite Alfred Nobel.

The prizes were first awarded in 1901.

24 lakh more

areas.

Suggestions for various monetary and fiscal measures for the countries in South Asia region including Bangladesh in response to the crisis were made in the Istanbul meet.

The report mentioned that South Asian countries have already taken various monetary and fiscal measures in response to the crisis.

Additional actions will be needed however to reduce the impact and pave the way for a resumption of rapid growth. The WB is advocating policies that provide fiscal stimulus, investment in sound public infrastructure projects, creating a favourable investment climate, and scale up existing safety net programmes to protect the poor.

The WB also said in the last fiscal year, it approved 36 projects in South Asia to overcome the crisis.