

# Lanka military on alert ahead of vote

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka placed nearly 20,000 troops on alert to reinforce police as violence escalated ahead of parliamentary elections, a police spokesman said yesterday.

The private Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) reported 325 minor incidents of poll-related violence in the run-up to Thursday's vote, with firearms being used in about 50 cases.

Hundreds of people had been wounded in the clashes between campaigners, but no deaths have been reported.

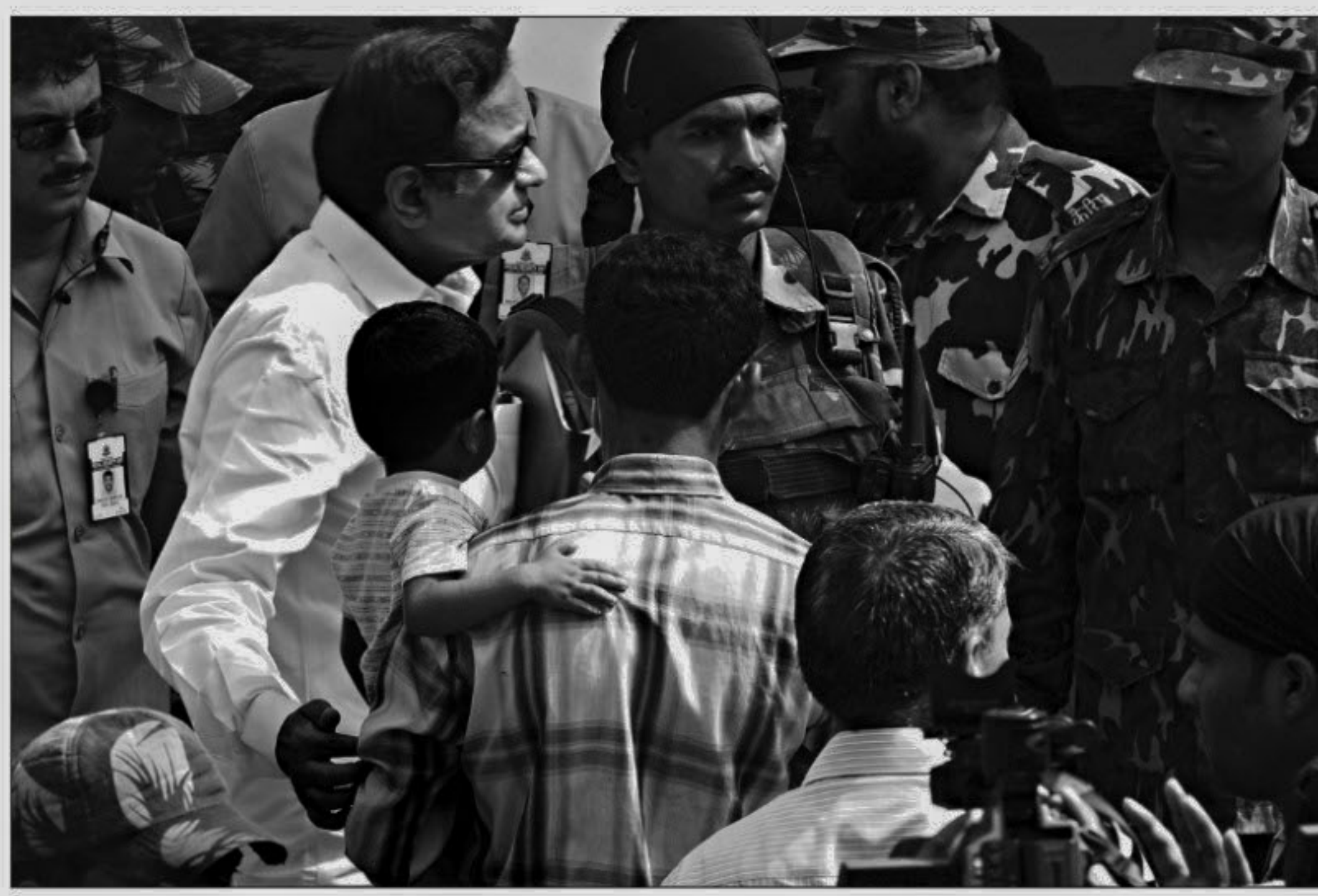
The military will be on stand-by to assist the 60,000 police already deployed for election-related security duties, spokesman Prashantha Jayakody said.

"We are intensifying security in areas where there had been more violence," Jayakody said. "The military will not be deployed inside polling booths but they will help us in places where there could be trouble."

The ruling Freedom Alliance of President Mahinda Rajapakse is widely expected to win Thursday's assembly elections, the first since his government crushed separatist Tamil Tiger rebels in May last year.

Rajapakse won re-election with a thumping 58 percent at the January 26 presidential vote and he called the parliamentary elections two months ahead of schedule.

Police said they had received 270 poll-related complaints and 200 people had been arrested.



Indian Home Minister P Chidambaram (2L) speaks with a villager during a visit to a Maoist-hit village in West Midnapore District of Kolkata on Sunday. At least 10 Indian policemen were killed yesterday when their vehicle struck a land mine planted by suspected Maoist rebels in neighbouring state of Orissa, police said.

PHOTO: AFP

# Chidambaram makes offer of talks to Maoists

PTI, Lalgarh

On his first visit to the heart of Naxal territory in West Bengal, Union Home Minister P Chidambaram yesterday ruled out involvement of military in anti-Maoist operations and made a fresh offer of dialogue with the left-wing extremists.

Visiting Lalgarh in West Midnapore district for an assessment of the situation and review of the anti-Maoist drive, Chidambaram also said during discussions with Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee in Kolkata, he had stated that the "buck stops" at the Chief Minister's table with regard to the law and order issue.

# Constitution must be drafted on time: Prachanda

PTI, Kathmandu

Accusing "regressive forces" of conspiring against the timely drafting of new Constitution, Nepal's opposition Maoists chief Prachanda yesterday said it must be promulgated by the May 28 deadline to save the country from those opposing federalism, republicanism and secularism.

"It is necessary to draft the Constitution within the time frame in order to foil the conspiracy being hatched by the regressive forces," Prachanda said, addressing a function of pro-Maoist construction workers in Chitawan in southern Nepal.

"The statute must be drafted by May 28 to save the country from those who oppose federalism, republicanism and secularism," he said.

Prachanda said "the regressive forces" think that they can "retract the history" with the demise of five-time Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, but their dreams will never come true.

# Karzai lambastes West again

AFP, Washington

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has slammed Western President Barack Obama for the second time in a week, accusing the United States of interference, The Wall Street Journal reported yesterday.

In a private meeting with up to 70 Afghan lawmakers Saturday, Karzai also warned that the Taliban insurgency could become a legitimate resistance movement if foreign meddling in Afghan affairs continues, the Journal said, citing participants in the talks.

During the talks, Karzai, whose government is supported by billions of dollars of Western aid and 126,000 foreign troops fighting the Taliban, said he would be compelled to join the insurgency himself if the parliament does not back his bid to take over Afghanistan's electoral watchdog.

His comments came less than a day after Karzai sought to defuse tensions over his

earlier anti-foreigner outburst by assuring US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton he was committed to working with the United States.

Kabul and Washington said they were putting behind them the incident, which saw Karzai publicly claim last week that foreigners orchestrated election fraud.

The latest remarks were sure to further erode an already fragile relationship. During a brief, unannounced visit to Kabul on Monday, Obama urged Karzai to rid his government of its pervasive corruption.

Karzai spent a large part of two and a half hours criticizing lawmakers for rejecting his efforts to wrestle control of the country's Electoral Complaints Commission from the United Nations, five of the legislators who gathered at the presidential palace told the Journal.

Western officials were said to be seeking the installation of a "puppet government" in Afghanistan, the lawmakers said.

# Troops kill 38 militants in Pakistan

AP, Parachinar

Security forces killed 38 militants in two separate operations yesterday in an area near the Afghan border where the army recently launched an offensive targeting the Pakistani Taliban, a local official said.

The offensive in the Orakzai tribal area is the latest push by the Pakistani army to rout the Islamist extremists. Many Taliban fighters fled to the rugged, mountainous region last year after a separate operation in nearby South Waziristan, which had served as the group's main base.

Militants attacked an army checkpoint in Sayd Khalil Baba village Sunday morning, but troops backed by artillery fire repulsed the assault and killed 26 insurgents, said Samiullah Khan, a senior government administrator in the Orakzai region.

Also Sunday, soldiers invaded militant hide-outs in another area of Orakzai, killing 12 Taliban fighters, said Khan.

It is impossible to independently verify the government's claims because the area is off-limits to journalists. Taliban fighters in the area are not available for comment.

Pakistani forces began their operation in Orakzai in mid-March, and more than 250 militants have been killed, Khan said.

Thousands of civilians have moved to a government camp in nearby Kohat district or moved in with relatives in neighbouring regions to escape the fighting.

# Two killed in Kashmir border

AFP, Srinagar

Indian troops yesterday shot dead two suspected militants after they sneaked into Indian Kashmir from the Pakistani zone of the disputed region, an army spokesman said.

The two were killed along the Line of Control (LOC) -- the de facto border that splits Kashmir between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan -- in the northern Keran sector, spokesman J.S. Brar said.

It was the second infiltration attempt in the rugged and mountainous area within a week.

India's military said last month around 400 militants were poised to cross into Indian Kashmir from the Pakistani zone of the scenic Himalayan region.



This handout photo made available by the German government press office shows German soldiers carrying a coffin towards a helicopter after a memorial service for the three German soldiers killed during fighting with the Taliban two-days earlier in Kunduz, Afghanistan yesterday. The remains of the soldiers are to be flown back to Germany later in the day.

PHOTO: AFP

# Marja Taliban using 'compensation' money against Marines

ANI, New York

In an attempt to garner public support, US Marines engaged in an intense battle with the Taliban in Marja, have been offering thousands of dollars a week to the local residents as compensation for property damage, but the move has backfired as the insurgents are using the same money against the international forces stationed in Afghanistan.

With an aim to win over worried locals in Marja, the Marines were paying them compensation for property damage or putting them to work, a tactical approach which helped the US turn the tide in Iraq, but in Afghanistan the move seems to be helping the insurgents more rather than reducing the massive anti-American sentiment in the war ravaged country.

Both Afghan and US officials are aware of the fact that the Taliban is using the compensation for acquiring arms and ammunition to be used against foreign troops, but they say it is hard to recognise the extremists among the masses.

# India rejects allegations of waging 'water war'

PTI, Islamabad

Rejecting as "preposterous and completely unwarranted" the allegations that it is stealing Pakistan's share of river waters and waging a water war, India has said it is "scrupulously" providing Islamabad its share of water in line with the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty.

Indian High Commissioner Sharat Sabharwal yesterday said that reduced flow of river waters into Pakistan are not the result of any "violation of Indus Waters Treaty by India."



Pakistani author Fatima Bhutto (L), niece of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, poses with writer William Dalrymple during the launch of her book 'Songs of Blood and Sword' in New Delhi on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Southeast Asian river countries meet China over dam fears

AFP, Hua Hin

Southeast Asian nations on the shrinking lower Mekong River began talks with China yesterday over fears that its dams are further depleting the waterway, which is at its lowest levels in decades.

A Chinese delegation held talks in the Thai coastal town of Hua Hin ahead of a Monday meeting to be attended by Beijing's Vice Foreign Minister Song Tao and the prime ministers of Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam.

Leaders are discussing management of the vast river, on which more than 60 million people depend, amid a crippling drought in the region and controversy surrounding the role of China's hydropower dams and fears over climate change.

"All the attention is on China, I think all the bilateral meetings that China's having... I think these are going to be extremely important," said summit organiser Jeremy Bird.

The summit, the first to be organised by the inter-governmental Mekong River Commission (MRC) in its 15-year history, comes after the Mekong has shrivelled to its lowest level in 50 years in Laos and Thailand's north.

Bird, head of the MRC's secretariat, dismissed activists' concerns that dams were behind the water shortage, but representatives for the Southeast Asian countries said better river data was needed to allay fears.

"It's mostly (about) clarification on water levels. I think there's speculation that's all, suspicion," said Thai delegate Isra Sunthornvut.

"We don't know the facts and we would like to know the facts," added Isra, an official in the Thai prime minister's office.

The Chinese embassy in Bangkok last week said China would "never do things that harm the interests of (lower Mekong) countries" and had agreed to share water level data from two dams during this dry season.

# Mock security drills at India Gate, SC building

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

Delhi Police yesterday carried out mock security drills at the India Gate and the Supreme Court complex here to check operational preparedness and review security in the capital.

Bomb disposal squad, dog squad, quick reaction teams and policemen from nearby police stations were immediately pressed into action when an 'unidentified bag' was found on the lawns of the India Gate, a police officer said.

At the Supreme Court, security personnel simulated a scenario of a cross-firing at the outer gate of the building, the officer said.

# Probe agency

FROM PAGE 1

Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and Assistant Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam appeared on the list.

Hasan claims the documents are strong enough to prove the allegations against the war crimes suspects.

Chief Investigator Abdul Matin told The Daily Star they have officially received all the documents from WCFFC so that from now on they can consider those as official.

"We will go through the documents and see which helps in our investigation," said Matin.

Hasan said the Jamaat leaders were members of Al-Badr, which had a killing squad during the Liberation War, and WCFFC has collected documents about its activities.

He said WCFFC published the list of alleged war criminals in 2008 and the Special Branch and National Security Intelligence scrutinised it as per the directive of the then caretaker government.

He added the entire nation will fail if the government fails to try the war criminals.

The war criminals hiding abroad have to be brought back for trial, he said, adding his organisation is ready to help the government by

hiring legal experts from the United Nations to proceed with the war crimes case.

The submitted documents include 26 books, list and sketch maps of some Baddhabhumis [killing grounds], photos of victims and offenders, audio and video records of killings and torture during the Liberation War, and audio records on the orders published by Pakistani army on March 25, 1971.

The WCFFC also gave forensic exhibits including bones, earrings and parts of dresses of victims to the investigators.

The committee handed over some copies of the daily Sangram, mouthpiece of Jamaat-e Islami, along with some foreign books. The books are *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution* by Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* by Husain Haqqani, *Sun Set at Midday* by Mohiuddin Choudhury, *Blood and Soil* by Ben Kiernan and *Papers on Genocide, War Crime and Crime Against Humanity in Bangladesh* by Dr MA Hasan.

Earlier on March 25, the government announced a special tribunal, prosecution team and the investigation agency to try the war criminals.

# RMG units without fire

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form the proposed industrial police unit immediately.

"There is no alternative to industrial police and intelligence units for combating incidents of fire," BGMEA President Abdus Salam Murschedy told the meeting, also emphasising on more monitoring and training activities to check incidents of fire.

He said although Gazipur is an industrial zone, the number of fire stations in the area is not sufficient. He proposed to establish more fire stations there.

Sahara said formation of industrial police is at the final stage, and an announcement will soon come in that regard. About duty-free ambulances and fire fighting vehicles she said the government will consider the proposal with due importance.

The meeting widely discussed the fire at Garib & Garib sweater factory in Gazipur on

February 25 this year which had killed at least 25 persons, and observed that marketability of Bangladeshi ready-made garments might be affected adversely if incidents of fire keep continue to occur in the country's garment factories.

The meeting asked the Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate to deploy its 12 teams responsible for regular inspection of fire safety compliance by garment factories. Formed in 2003, the teams still remain underdeployed.

"The teams will make surprise visits and immediately inform BGMEA and BKMEA if they find any factory lacking adequate safety measures," said a home ministry official, who was present at the meeting. "BGMEA and BKMEA will take actions against the non-compliant factories," he added.

The meeting decided that all garment factories must keep their rooftops accessible; the rooftop doors, factory

entrances, fire escapes, and emergency gates must always remain unlocked; fabrics and other flammable materials cannot be kept laying around on factory floors; and all factories must arrange fire drills on a regular basis.

Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defence Brig Gen Abu Naim Md Shahidullah said about 10,000 incidents of fire occurred in the country in 2009, only 2 percent of which occurred in garment factories. He said most garment factories have adequate fire safety measures in place.

The meeting also observed that garment factories are scattered in different places, prompting the apparel industry leaders to propose that the government takes a long-term plan to shift the factories to a designated area.

Officials of the commerce, labour and manpower, and home ministries were also present at the meeting.

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*Search for Senior Executives*

**01. General Manager (Operations)**

*Required Profile:*

- MBA/Masters Degree in Marketing/Economics/Accounting/Finance/Management/ Banking;
- Atleast 12 years work experience in the related field and atleast 2 years as General Manager or equivalent position in Bank or Financial Institutions;
- Well-conversant with the Banking and Financial Regulations, Capital Market Regulations, etc.
- Ability to deal with public and private sector organizations and competent to supervise and work with a highly skilled and dynamic group of professionals; Should have adequate training in related field;
- Able to develop outstanding business with set target and marketing strategy independently;
- Age limit: 40 to 50 years;

*Selected applicant will be appointed as Head of Operations Department*

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**02. Chartered Accountant**

*Required Profile:*

- Chartered Accountant having good academic records;
- Should have experience in Corporate Affairs and conversant with Financial Rules, Company Law, Fiscal Policy, Taxation Law, Bangladesh Bank's and SEC regulations, etc.
- Ability to deal with public and private sector organizations;
- Age limit: 40 to 45 years;

*Selected applicant will be appointed as Head of Finance & Accounts and Company Secretary*

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● *Salary and Benefits for above mentioned positions is Negotiable*

Interested candidates are requested to apply in confidence with complete CV and 2 recent passport size photographs to Admin & HR Department by April 15, 2010.

**Short listed candidates will be called for interview**