

N Sudan bombs southern oil state

AFP, Juba

The Sudanese army has launched repeated air strikes on southern army positions in Unity state, less than a month ahead of the south's independence, in a bid to seize the state's oilfields, a southern army spokesman charged yesterday.

"SAF aircraft bombed the area of Yau, in Unity state, many times on Thursday," Philip Aguer told AFP, referring to the north's Sudanese Armed Forces.

"This area is deep inside south Sudan and is a move by Khartoum to control the area and create a de facto border to control our oilfields," added the spokesman for the Sudan People's Liberation Army of the south.

Aguer said the SPLA was on "maximum alert" and strengthening its defensive positions, fearing the start of an invasion to seize the oilfields.

A UN spokeswoman, however, denied that the northern army had launched air strikes south of the border.

"The place that they bombed was an SPLA assembly area, right on the north-south bor-

der. This is one of the disputed territories," Hua Jiang for the UN mission in Sudan told AFP.

A Sudanese army spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

Heavy clashes between SAF troops and northern members of the former southern rebel army first erupted in South Kordofan, the adjacent state north of the border, on Sunday.

The United Nations earlier warned that the fighting had spread right across the volatile border state, raising the prospect of direct conflict between north and south Sudan ahead of southern independence on July 9.

Bombing and heavy artillery fire was again heard early yesterday around South Kordofan's capital Kadugli, where the UN spokeswoman said the northern army was observed reinforcing its military positions.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in Geneva yesterday that up to 40,000 people are now estimated to have been displaced by the fighting in Kadugli alone.

South Kordofan is north Sudan's only oil-producing state.

Suu Kyi to present the BBC's Reith Lectures

BBC ONLINE

Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese pro-democracy leader, will deliver the 2011 BBC Reith Lectures.

Her two lectures will discuss the themes of dissent and liberty and will be broadcast on BBC Radio from 28 June.

The lectures are part of a wider series, entitled 'Securing Freedom', reflecting on global events of the past year.

Former M15 Director-General Baroness Manningham-Buller will present three further lectures in September.

Aung San Suu Kyi said: "When I was under house arrest, it was the BBC that spoke to me - I listened.

"I am so grateful for this opportunity to exercise my right to human contact by sharing with you my thoughts on what freedom means to me, and others across the world who are still in the sad state of



what I would call 'freedom'."

BBC Radio 4 Controller Gwyneth Williams said "I am thrilled to have as our 2011 Reith lecturers Aung San Suu Kyi, addressing the themes of dissent and liberty, and Eliza Manningham-Buller who, on the tenth anniversary, will reflect on intelligence and foreign policy since 9/11.

"These are two very different sides of a familiar story - the struggle for liberty and its defence."

Aung San Suu Kyi's first lecture will examine the notion of dissent, and will draw on her personal experience as a campaigner for democracy.

In 1990, Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won the Burmese election by a landslide. She then spent 15 of the next 20 years under house arrest, and was finally released on November 13, 2010.

Financing budget a major challenge

FROM PAGE 20

"In addition, increased borrowings from the public through the banking system reduce availability of credit for trade and industry," it said.

The MCCI thinks that since the current inflationary pressures are being generated largely due to increased commodity and fuel prices internationally, curtailing the supply of

credit to the private sector will have a detrimental effect on the economy.

"Therefore, industrial credit should be made available through increasing access to funds, whether from the banking sector or otherwise; at the same time ensuring that such funds remain in industry and do not get channelled out to unproductive sectors."

In addition, introduction

of five percent income tax on poultry farms and fisheries will further inflate food price.

The chamber expressed disappointment over money whitening provision and termed it discriminatory towards and discouraging for genuine tax payers. "Whitening of undisclosed income will have an adverse impact in the long term in the people's attitude

towards paying tax, without any significant positive effect on the economy."

Any concession must be limited to income from legal sources only, and should attract tax at least at the highest individual rate.

It is, however, encouraging that money whitening through investment in the stockmarket has not been permitted, the MCCI said, adding: "In order to bring

further transparency and discipline in the stockmarket operations, BO [beneficiary owner] account holders should be required to submit TIN, even if their income from the capital market is not taxable. This will prevent the use of multiple BO accounts for manipulating the market."

The increase in the source tax rates for registration of commercial buildings is too high and it will swell the cost of doing business, it noted. "The principle enunciated behind it is that a significant amount of the money paid for such purchases should not go outside the recognised economy. In that case, the registration fee should also be reduced commensurately, but that has not been done."

The MCCI also criticised the government for proposing an increase in advance income tax (AIT) on export and raising the tax rate on disputed tax for filing appeal to the Tax Appellate Tribunal and for filing reference to the High Court.

The chamber, however, lauded the government for framing the proposed budget against the backdrop of the global economic recession and attempting to stimulate local demand, providing appropriate protection to domestic industries and delivering a wide range of social safety measures aimed at improving the economic condition of the people.

Allocations for power and energy, agriculture, transport, education, information and technology, health, local government, human resources development and rural development are commendable. And the increased investments in physical and social infrastructure will help improve the quality of people's lives and create better employment opportunities.

"With regard to communications, MCCI would like to see the creation of a separate ministry for Railways, as earlier committed by the prime minister, with commensurate budgetary allocation. A strong railway system will reduce pressure on roads and create significant cost and efficiency savings in transport of people and goods," the chamber said.

Commenting on the seven percent GDP growth target, it said: "As time progresses, this should be raised to eight percent as the economy has started showing encouraging signs with higher demand for investment credit, increased import of raw materials and betterment of export performance. Higher GDP growth is necessary also for achieving the status of a middle income country by 2021."

"While we appreciate the progressive proposals placed in the budget, we are concerned with the implementation of these proposals. The monitoring and implementation mechanisms need to be strengthened and enhanced significantly in order to achieve the proposed ambitious growth in the economy."

Toxic gas kills 3

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Building owner Hamid Ali Bacchu, of Gobardia village, hired Malek for the renovation work of the tank that was built two months ago.

Quoting eyewitnesses, police said Malek slipped into the 15-foot deep tank by accident at about 6:30pm.

Failing to get any response from the mason, the house owner managed to convince Nakib, who was passing the area on a motorcycle, to go inside the tank for Malek's rescue.

As Nakib did not return after sometime, Bacchu convinced Ariful, who was playing with his friends in the area, to inquire into the matter inside the tank.

Ariful also became victim of poisonous gas.

On information, a team of firefighters from Bagerhat

fire brigade reached the spot and rescued the three in an unconscious state at about 7:00pm.

They were immediately rushed to the Bagerhat General Hospital where doctors declared them dead at about 7:30pm.

All the three died from inhaling methane gas that was trapped inside the tank, said Moazzem Hossain,

officer-in-charge of Bagerhat Sadar Police Station, quoting Md Zahidur Rahman, station officer of Bagerhat Fire Brigade.

Building owner Bacchu has been absconding since Thursday night.

"We are trying hard to arrest Bacchu as he will be held responsible for the deaths," OC Moazzem added.



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