

SRI LANKA OBSERVES WAR ANNIVERSARY

'India was key to winning war'

AGENCIES

Sri Lanka yesterday marked the three-year anniversary of the end of its 26-year civil war with a large military parade in the capital, Colombo.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa gave a speech at the event, which commemorates soldiers who fought against Tamil Tiger rebels, or the LTTE.

Critics say the celebratory nature of the victory parade is inappropriate.

R Sampanthan, leader of the main Tamil party, said the "triumphalism" over the war should end.

"The LTTE [Tamil Tigers] has been defeated. That is the reality that everybody knows. And celebrating a military victory year after year is not going to be helpful from the point of view of reconciliation," he said.

Meanwhile, India's change of stand played a key role in winning the war against LTTE, a book, written with considerable establishment support, has claimed.

The book 'Gota's War' said India



Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa inspects a War Victory parade in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

took the hard stance of to 'terrorism should be countered with resolve' in late 2008.

"It was only after October 2008 following a visit to India by Basil Rajapaksa that the Indian stance seemed to change completely and they dropped all mention of negotiations and peace talks even from their public statements on Sri Lanka... [India] said that] terrorism should be

countered with resolve. A great change from what we have seen before," said Sri Lankan President's Secretary Lalith Weeraratna, paraphrasing a few lines from the book, at its launch on last Monday.

On an earlier occasion, at a seminar on defeating terrorism held here, Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa had held that "managing India" was the key to winning the war

against the Tamil Tigers.

Weeraratna said this was done in a deft manner, with the setting up of the Troika an arrangement where three top bureaucrats each from both countries are constantly in touch. And it was a groundbreaking success, he added.

According to the book, after Basil Rajapaksa's visit, a minister now, the Indians never again said publicly or privately, that there was no military solution to the conflict," the book notes.

Sri Lanka's civil war began in the 1980s, with Tamils pressing for self-rule against a backdrop of an increasingly assertive Sinhalese nationalism.

Most of the fighting took place in the Tamil-dominated north, but the Tamil Tigers, or LTTE, also carried out suicide bombings in Colombo in the 1990s.

The violence killed more than 70,000 people over several decades, with accusations that both sides in the conflict committed war crimes against civilians.

FISHERMEN KILLING India charges prompt row with Italy

BBC ONLINE

Indian police on Friday charged two Italian marines with the murder of two Indian fishermen sparking a row with Italy.

The marines are accused of shooting the two fishermen dead in February after allegedly mistaking them for pirates.

Italy has recalled its ambassador for consultations. It says the incident took place in international waters and that the men should be tried in Italy.

The marines were guarding an Italian oil tanker off India's south-western coast when the incident occurred.

Italy agreed in April to pay 10m rupees (£117,013; 143,203 euros; \$189,000) in compensation to each of the families of the two Indian fishermen.

'Maoists are here' Angry Mamata storms out of live TV session

PTI, Kolkata

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday lost her cool and stormed out of an interactive TV session here when members of audience asked her about the arrest of a professor for forwarding a cartoon lampooning her.

"It is not a cartoon. We love the cartoon. Cartoon is a different thing. He is a CPI-M man, He misused the e-mail of his society people without their consent. He forwarded it to 60 people," Banerjee said angrily when a student from Jadavpur University asked her about the arrest of Prof Ambikesh Mahapatra.

Claiming that the professor was not an intellectual, but "CPM agent", she told the moderator that "after election CPM had sent thousands of CDs, if you are a woman and if you see them, you will feel ashamed. CPM and Maoists are working together."

When a girl from Jadavpur University rose to ask a question, Banerjee asked "Why (students from) other universities are not here? There are so many universities. You tell me why, What about the others."

"Are you a Maoist?" Banerjee asked the girl. The student shot back, "I am not a Maoist." When the moderator referred to crime against women in the state, Banerjee dismissively said, "no crime. No crime against women."

To another question, Banerjee said, "we don't support the Maoists. There are so many things and other issues to ask. What is this nonsense going on? Maoists people are here. They are Maoist students. I cannot answer the Maoists' questions and CPM questions."

Mysterious raid

FROM PAGE 1

A day after the incident, police and Rapid Action Battalion officials concerned said they have no idea about who went to the house identifying themselves as plain-clothes detectives.

Labib Sharar, son of Ilias Ali, said the family's feeling of insecurity has deepened after the incident.

Meanwhile, police yesterday afternoon installed three closed-circuit cameras at the main entrance to the house.

Md Shahnewaz Khaled, assistant commissioner at Gulshan zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), said they installed the devices after assessing the overall security of Ilias' family members.

Human rights leader Sultana Kamal, also a former adviser to a caretaker government, expressed concern over the "reluctance" of law enforcers and intelligence personnel to find out who had gone to the house.

She said it is the duty of the law enforcers to find those people; if otherwise, people of the country would feel more insecure.

Tahsina Rusdir Luna, wife of Ilias, had said some people identifying them-

selves as Detective Branch (DB) of police personnel tired to force their way into her home to "conduct a search" around 1:15am on Friday.

However, minutes after the strangers had left, Officer-in-Charge of Banani Police Station Mamun-or-Rashid told reporters that some DB personnel had gone to the house mistakenly.

The OC, however, yesterday retracted his statement. "I had heard that some DB men went to the house mistakenly, but I didn't see them. In fact, it was a misinformation."

Khandker Lutful Kabir, deputy commissioner at Gulshan zone of DMP, said the OC had made the comment based on an assumption, which led to misunderstandings.

Police were trying to find out who had gone to the house, he added.

Lt Col Ziaul Ahsan, director of the intelligence wing of Rab, said none of his force went to the house and they do not know about who went there.

Ilias Ali and his driver Ansar Ali went missing in the wee hours of April 18 from the capital's Banani area.

His car was found abandoned near his home.

Rogues make

FROM PAGE 1

big investment sector where trading and money game were a common practice.

Journalists and the authorities now try to please each other, and in such a situation, a newspaper can just become a subservient one, he said.

The former chief adviser was addressing a seminar on "Freedom of Press: In the Context of Bangladesh" organised by Journalism Training and Research Initiative (Jatri) at its office in the capital's Karwanbazar on the eve of World Press Freedom Day 2012.

"Today, often freedom of newspaper owners is considered as freedom of the press", he said, adding it was limited freedom. Editors and publishers have government or social recognition and respect, he said. "Only a handful of readers can know whose interests they are serving under the cover of this respect."

Justice Rahman went on, "Allegations are heard that from loan defaulters and land grabbers to military and non-military intelligence are financing the publication of newspapers.

Investing in newspapers has become lucrative to the rich who often do not hesitate to publish something in print for immediate gains or creating panic and defeating rivals."

He added, "Due to lack of security, the door for free journalism is getting closed. In such a situation, journalists will have to look after their own interests", he said. "At least for the sake of getting justice, the two unions of journalists will have to be united, and I want to live with this hope."

Earlier, the former chief adviser presented some data of repression on journalists till December 31 last year on the basis of reports of in 10 national dailies.

According to the reports, 288 journalists became victims in 154 incidents. Of them, 101 suffered repression for publishing reports while 110 were assaulted and 47 came under attack by law enforcers.

Journalists shared their views at the programme moderated by Jatri chief executive Jamil Ahmed.

They regretted the absence of a policy for the press.

Yaba baron makes it

FROM PAGE 20

Wrapped in plastic bags and hidden in sacks Kulu's last consignment of Yaba came to Teknaf from Myanmar crossing the Naf river and thereon to the port city through Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Highway and the Karnaphuli river.

During the primary interrogation, Kulu confessed to Rab that he had received the consignment of 2,50,000 pieces of Yaba tablets on March 20 and a month ago, another shipment of 1,50,000 pieces came to him.

In Rab investigation it was found that most of the Yaba factories are located along the border between Myanmar and China. Two factories are situated along the border of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Kulu used to buy Yaba tablets from Myanmar national Amin at Tk 50 a piece and sell, mainly from Chittagong, at Tk 70 to local retailers. The retailers sell each tablet at Tk 300 to their customers. Amin purchase the tablets from China at Tk 30 a piece.

The business was done on credit, so money was not a problem. The retailers would pay Kulu after selling

the tablets and Kulu used to repay Amin from that.

Three months ago, Atau, one of the accomplices who was arrested with Kulu, rented the warehouse in Asadganj for three years from Abdul Malek Chowdhury paying Tk 2,40,000 in advance. He told the warehouse owner that they would store plum pickles, jam and jelly.

Rashid Kulu, son of Ali Ahmed, was born in Myanmar in 1962. After the Liberation War of Bangladesh his family shifted to Shahpari Dwp here and his father started importing plum and tamarind pickles from Myanmar.

After his father's death, Kulu took up the business

and began to smuggle in various drugs to become rich in no time.

He had erected a five-storey building in Boropul area under Halishahar Police Station and started importing Yaba five months ago, said Rab sources.

Before Friday's haul the biggest Yaba haul took place in 2006 in which 1,25,000 tablets were seized from Dhaka.

"Rab and the intelligence agency had been trying to trace Kulu for the last four months," said Ziaul Ahsan, acting commanding officer of Rab-7.

For the last few years drug peddlers had been switching to Yaba smuggling over other drugs since it is small in size and easy to hide and transport, said sources in the

Department of Narcotics Control.

In the shipping Yaba used to be smuggled from Dubai and Pakistan at a high rate but after the setting up of factories in Myanmar it has become cheaper.

Mukul Jyoti Chakma, deputy director of narcotics control department in Chittagong, told The Daily Star, "Chittagong is the main transit point in the Indian subcontinent. So drug smugglers, mainly Yaba traders, use the route, as it is easier and safer to them."

"Not only Teknaf-Myanmar border but the hilly forest adjacent to the Bangladesh-Myanmar border is also used as a popular smuggling route, added Mukul Chakma.

Advertisement for Jahangirnagar University featuring a table with columns for serial number, name of candidate, and marks. Includes university logo and contact information.

Diplomatic circles

FROM PAGE 1 Mukharjee. But after a brief respite, the country was plunged into confrontational politics when 33 top ranking opposition leaders were arrested, and, in consequence, a hartal was called.

Both Hillary and Pranab during their Dhaka visits urged the two top political parties to work together and sit for dialogues to resolve differences in viewpoints on any policy matter.

Reacting to the recent arrests of opposition leaders and the subsequent hartal, a European diplomat on condition of anonymity said, "I was just thinking that the political situation had calmed down with the high level visits... but this was unlikely to continue..."

The present political situation in Bangladesh concerned the international community, another European diplomat said.

It seems both the ruling and opposition parties are growing impatient--one wants to continue to be in power while another wants to bring down the government, said a diplomat from a leading Asian country, adding the rivalry between them was putting serious obstacles to the country's development.

A diplomat from a South Asian country said he could sense a worst-ever political situation in the coming days if the political parties, especially the ruling party, failed to set the mechanism of

holding the next parliamentary elections in a free and credible way.

Meanwhile, the European countries' envoys in Dhaka at a press conference on May 9 said political violence, hartals, corruption and disappearances were blemishing Bangladesh's image abroad.

They expressed concern over BNP leader Ilias Ali's going missing and the killing of garment workers' leader Aminul Islam.

They called for dialogues between the major political parties to resolve the issue of the next general elections.

The US Secretary of State on May 5 at a press conference in Dhaka urged all sides to settle differences through constructive political dialogues, including parliamentary debate.

"In a strong democracy, everybody has to be rowing in the same direction because you're all in the same boat. You're going to make progress together or you're going to run into very turbulent waters," she said.

Acknowledging that the 2008 elections were free and fair as recognised by the world, Hillary said, "I feel so hopeful about what can happen here, and I really am urging all parties-- not just the government-- but all parties to do everything necessary to support democracy, to plan for another free, fair, and credible election and to stay committed."

Advertisement for the National Election Commission (NEC) featuring a table with columns for serial number, name of candidate, and marks. Includes the NEC logo and contact information.