

Heavy fighting near key town in Karabakh

AFP, Yerevan

Armenia yesterday reported that “fierce combat” with Azerbaijani forces took place overnight near the town of Shusha, a key stronghold in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

After weeks of heavy fighting over the mountainous province, Azerbaijan appears to be closing in on the strategic town, 15 kilometres (nine miles) from Karabakh’s main city Stepanakert.

The hilltop town of Shusha is located on a main road that links the unrecognised republic’s capital with the territory of Armenia, which backs the separatists fighting for Karabakh’s independence.

Armenian defence ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan reported “especially intensive and fierce combat” overnight outside Shusha, adding that numerous attacks from Azerbaijan were thwarted.

Armenia also said that throughout the night there was regular shelling on Shusha, home to an iconic Armenian cathedral that was damaged in attacks last month.

The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry rejected this claim saying the information of shelling on Shusha is “completely untrue”.

First Eid

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There was a stream of people to Gono Bhaban to meet Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to convey their Eid greetings. Bangabandhu met hundreds of people both at his private residence and at the official residence and exchanged happy wishes. The prime minister also called on the President Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury at the Bangabhaban to convey Eid greetings. **SADRUDDIN’S EID GREETINGS TO BANGABANDHU**
Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the United Nations high commissioner for refugees, has sent congratulations to Bangabandhu and through him to the people of Bangladesh on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr and sent his best wishers for the health and happiness of the prime minister and the people of Bangladesh. The prime minister in his reply thanked the UN high commissioner for refugees for his Eid greetings and expressed similar sentiments on this auspicious occasion.

BANGLADESH WILL BE INCLUDED IN UN AGENDA

The Yugoslav resolution, supported by 20 countries, calling for the admission of Bangladesh in the United Nations at an early date is today sent for registration to the General Assembly Secretariat. The Yugoslav resolution will now be included in the General Assembly Agenda for discussion sometime in the third week of November, 1972. *SOURCES: November 11, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.*

Suspect

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union parishad building, breaking its window grills, collapsible gates and attacking Jewel.

The agitators also vandalised and burnt different establishments and attacked police, who had to fire rubber bullets to calm the situation. Three cases were filed following the incident.

With Hossain’s arrest, 24 accused so far have been arrested. Twelve of them are accused in the murder case while 12 others are accused in the two other cases.

Hossain is a member of the mosque management committee. He had been absconding since the incident.

A team of Mirpur division of Detective Branch of police arrested Hossain Ali in a drive early yesterday while he was trying to flee to Chattogram.

“We had been working to arrest the accused following requests from Lalmonirhat police and managed to arrest him acting on a tip-off,” said DB Senior Assistant Commissioner Mohammad Toyasir Jahan, who led the drive.

After the arrest, he was handed over to Lalmonirhat police, he added.

Meanwhile, Patgram Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Sumon Kumar Mohanta yesterday said the mosque committee could have quelled the mob fury, settling the issues that led to Jewel’s murder, reports our correspondent in Lalmonirhat.

“The committee could have sent both the victims, Jewel and his friend Sultan Rubaiyat Sumon, back, settling the issues. But instead, they wasted time, keeping the victims at the UP office, giving the mob the chance to gather,” the OC said while talking to The Daily Star.

“I was hit by stones and sticks, but I was able to save one life. It is my only consolation,” said the OC. “But the tragedy remains, I could not save the life of the other person,” he added.



PHOTO: STAR

The memorial of Wickliffe Syiem, the deputy king of Nongstoin state, one of 25 Khasi states in present-day Meghalaya, stands at Rajai village in Tahirpur upazila of Sunamganj. Wickliffe, who dreamt of his state’s independence from the Indian government, lived in exile here till his death in 1988.

A free man and a lost kingdom

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Father felt it was like home and settled down, marrying my mother here,” said his son.

While India was gaining independence, all 25 states in the Khasi Hills signed the Standstill Agreement on August 9, 1947, according to historians David R Syiemlieh and Helen Giri.

Syiemlieh in his article “Constitutional Developments in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills 1824-1950” and Giri in the book “Khasis under British rule” shed light on the events centring on the Khasi states soon after the 1947 Partition.

Besides, the article titled “An Administrative History of Hima Nongstoin in the Colonial Period” by P Gracefulness Bonney also discussed this historic episode of Indian sub-continent.

On December 15, 1947, 19 Khasi states signed the Instrument of Accession that made them part of the Indian Dominion.

But six other states did not sign it and of them, Nongstoin declared independence on January 13, 1948.

King Sib Singh Syiem, Wickliffe’s uncle, was elected as president with deputy king Wickliffe as secretary of the state.

According to historian I Nongbri, the writer of “Ka Histori Ka Ri Hynniewtrep (Khasi land)”, the troops from India came to Nongstoin on March 10 that year, said Andrew Sholomar.

King Sib Singh Syiem was detained and Nongstoin was forced to sign the Instrument of Accession on March 18, 1948. Five other remaining states were also included in Indian Domino eventually, historians say.

As Wickliffe was out of the state capital at the time, the Indian government barred his entry to the kingdom.

Hearing of the takeover, Wickliffe wrote a letter to the then Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on March 20.

In the letter, a copy of which was shown to The Daily Star by Andrew Sholomar, who lives in Rajai, Wickliffe urged the Indian PM to order the provincial Assam government to stop its activities in Nongstoin.

As an exiled leader, he camped in Dhaka and on March 24, sent a telegram to then UN secretary-general Trygve Lie to save the independence of his state, according to a report by The Statesman on March 28, 1948.

T Rngaid, in his book “U Wickliffe Syiem”, claimed that Wickliffe also went to the UN Headquarters in New York to gain support.

Wickliffe’s struggle eventually failed and Nongstoin remains a part of India.

The Instrument of Accession only gives authority of defence, communications and foreign affairs to the central government. Till today, no Khasi state has signed the Instrument of Merger, which makes it a full-fledged part of India.

WICKLIFFE’S LIFE AND LEGACY

Born on August 15, 1909, in Nongstoin, Wickliffe completed a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from a college in Baroda, Gujarat in 1937, and became the first engineer from the Khasi community.

After completing his post-graduation in London, he joined as Attorney General of Nongstoin in

1940.

During the Second World War, he also served in the British Army as a wing commander.

Wickliffe made a career as an engineer at the Fenchuganj Fertiliser Factory, Mitsubishi Motors Factory, and Joypurhat Sugar Mill in the then East Pakistan, said his son.

He was the chief engineer of the Tekerghat Limestone project at Tahirpur upazila before he retired in 1971.

The once deputy king lived by his word of not returning to Nongstoin till the day he breathed his last in exile -- on October 21, 1988.

After his death, he was buried at Rajai village. His descendants from two wives live in Meghalaya of India and in Bangladesh.

Like Khasi king Tirot Singh and Khasi freedom fighter U Kiang Nangbah, who fought against British rule in the 19th century, Wickliffe too is remembered as a Khasi revolutionary.

Wickliffe is considered the founder of Hynniewtrep (Khasi) nationalism by the Khasi community.

US sees record Covid cases 3rd day in a row

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The infection figures came as President Donald Trump, who survived a bout of Covid-19 in October and has been widely criticized over his handling of the crisis, trailed his Democratic challenger in the vote count.

US cases are fast approaching 10 million, with more than 236,000 deaths, and the pandemic has hammered the world’s biggest economy, leaving millions jobless.

Trump has been a vocal opponent of lockdown measures, citing their impact on the economy, and has repeatedly clashed with his own government’s experts over coronavirus policy.

Unlike Biden, Trump held massive campaign rallies ahead of the November 3 vote, insisting the US was “rounding the turn” despite the virus surges.

Senior members of his

administration have contracted the virus recently with Trump’s chief of staff Mark Meadows the latest to test positive, media said late Friday.

Across the Atlantic, Greece became the latest European nation to enter lockdown yesterday with the continent reeling from a second, relentless coronavirus wave.

Under the measures, which came into force before daybreak, Greeks can only leave home if they receive authorization to a mobile phone request. Essential shops can stay open, including supermarkets and pharmacies. On the first day of the second lockdown Athens woke to checks on vehicle movements and doubled fines for not wearing masks, up to 300 euros.

The measures follow the imposition of restrictions in Italy, France, Ireland and Britain, while Switzerland is also

being hit hard by the virus.

Germany reported record daily figures yesterday with 23,399 new cases and 130 deaths.

Thousands of demonstrators were expected to gather in Leipzig on Saturday to protest against mask-wearing and new curbs to halt the virus spreading across Germany.

Poland was imposing fresh measures yesterday too, closing most shopping centers. The government is also shutting cinemas, theatres, galleries and other cultural institutions and making hotels available for business travellers only.

Governments are also exploring mass testing as a way to curb the pandemic.

In England, Liverpool on Friday began the country’s first city-wide coronavirus testing program. All 500,000 residents will be offered

repeat tests, even if asymptomatic, under a pilot scheme that could be rolled out nationwide if successful.

Britain yesterday banned entry to all non-resident foreigners coming from Denmark after a mutated version of the coronavirus linked to mink farms was found in humans.

With populations growing increasingly weary of lockdowns, protests have broken out in some countries. Demonstrators and the police have clashed in parts of Italy and the Czech Republic in recent weeks.

The Italian government announced new measures early yesterday to help businesses and families cope with the latest restrictions, including a national night curfew and lockdown in four regions. The latest aid package would total 2.5 billion euros (\$3.0 billion), media reported.

Unending holiday hurting a lot

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when the air communications would be restored.

In the mean time, his visa expired on October 9.

“I have never faced such a difficult situation during my long working life abroad. I need to return to work to support my family,” said the expatriate worker, who used to earn about Tk 40,000 a month in Kuwait.

Selim said his employer assured him of renewing his visa before he could fly back to Kuwait.

The oil-rich Gulf country had long been a major labour-exporting destination for Bangladesh. However,

the number of new recruits from Bangladesh declined sharply in the last few years.

Some 6.30 lakh Bangladeshis have been employed in Kuwait for over four decades since 1976, according to data of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET).

Around 3.5 lakh Bangladeshis are currently employed in different sectors in the Gulf country, said sources at the Bangladesh embassy in Kuwait.

Only 1,743 Bangladeshi workers could land jobs in Kuwait this year before the pandemic hit the world, down from 12,299 last year. The figure was 49,604 in 2017, said BMET.

Pandemic hikes concern over much-needed climate finance for poorest

THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION

Rich nations will need to boost efforts to provide funding for pandemic-hit poorer countries to battle climate change if they are to meet a promise of raising \$100 billion a year from 2020, climate finance officials and analysts said on Friday.

In an annual update, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said climate finance for developing states rose by 11% to \$78.9 billion in 2018 - about \$20 billion short of a flagship goal set this year.

In 2009, wealthy countries at U.N. climate talks agreed to channel \$100 billion - from public and private sources - each year starting in 2020 to

help poor nations develop in a low-carbon way and adapt to worsening climate change impacts.

But reaching that target has proved a challenge, even as demand for help is growing as a result of coronavirus-related economic downturns and surging climate-related disasters.

“Donors need to urgently step up their efforts to support developing countries to respond to the immediate effects of the pandemic and to integrate climate actions into each country’s recovery from the COVID-19 crisis,” OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said in a statement on the report.

Patricia Roy Akullo, co-chair of the ACT Alliance’s climate justice group, said meeting the \$100-billion goal was “about saving lives, and

preventing further suffering around the world”, as wild weather intensifies and oceans creep higher.

“These funds are urgently needed to deliver action on the ground by people and communities in climate-vulnerable countries,” she said.

That could include planting drought-resistant seed varieties, providing early warning of storms, building higher flood defences, planting mangroves, or installing solar power.

Reaching the \$100-billion-a-year target is seen as vital to the progress of U.N. climate negotiations.

Earlier this week, U.N. climate chief Patricia Espinosa told an investor forum the required resources “are simply not there yet” and urged them to encourage finance ministers to deliver.

during his visit to Kuwait last month requested the Gulf country to resume flights on Dhaka-Kuwait route to enable stranded Bangladeshi migrants to return to work.

He made the request during a meeting with his Kuwaiti counterpart Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on October 5, according to media reports.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Biman Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Mokabbir Hossain said Biman was ready to operate regular flights on this route, but it was yet to receive permission from the Kuwaiti authorities in this regard.

“Timely provision of the \$100 billion will help to build trust - it will also help provide important signals for investors,” she said.

But climate finance data is reported with a lag of up to two years, making it impossible to know whether the 2020 pledge will have been met by the end of this year.

Friday’s report showed that climate finance provided by wealthy governments increased to \$62.2 billion in 2018, up from \$54.5 billion in 2017, while the level of private climate finance mobilised was virtually flat at \$14.6 billion.

Joe Thwaites, a climate finance expert at the World Resources Institute, said the rise in government funding was “reassuring”.

3 held

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on Thursday when the woman was looking for her husband, who had left home two days earlier following a fight, the OC added.

After she reached Muslimnagar area, the three men forcefully took her to an abandoned place and raped her.

They told her they would kill her if she told anyone about the rape and then fled the area.

The woman filed a case in this connection with Fatulla Police Station on Friday night, after which was sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for tests.

4 ‘Neo-JMB’

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magazine, two rounds of bullets, one shooter gun, three Burmese knives, one kilogram of gun powder, two red tapes, four batteries and some Jihadi books from them, he said.

The DB police official claimed that Tanvir Ahmed is a second-year student of Jahangirnagar University and a fugitive accused in a terrorism case filed on January 14 with Ashulia Police Station. Tanvir joined the outfit in 2017.

Tanvir was trying to make a drone for conducting terrorist attacks, said the Rajshahi DIG.

On the other hand, Jakaria Jamil was also an accused in the case and he use to translate various terrorism-related articles from Arabic to Bangla and spread them online, police claimed.

Atikur, a student of North-South University’s Pharmacy department, was tasked with collecting money from different sources for the outfit, said Abdul Baten.

Accused Abu Saaid, an active member of the outfit, was preparing to go to the Middle-East, said the police official.

Freight train

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in a festive mood and very happy about successfully taking the spilled oil,” said Rajesh Bhowmick, a passerby who was traveling in the area.

Contacted, Shakawat Hosain, assistant station master of Sreemangal rail station, said the seven derailed wagons together contained around 1.60 lakhs litre of fuel.

How much fuel was spilled could not yet be calculated, he added.

Contacted, Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Srimangal Railway Police Station, said additional police have been deployed to prevent the looting of fuel.

Dulal Chandra Das, the railway’s senior deputy-assistant engineer, said the rescue operation has already started. It would take five to six hours more to complete rescue operation and to resume train communication.

He was talking to The Daily Star at around 6:30pm last evening.

Meanwhile in Gazipur, two people were killed and four others injured when a train hit a bus at Sonakhali level crossing in Gazipur’s Kaliakoir upazila early yesterday.

Rail communication between Dhaka and northern parts of the country remained suspended for five hours since the accident took place around 4:30am.

It occurred when the Dhaka-bound Nilsagar Express train from Chilahati hit the bus, said Monowar Hossain Chowdhury, OC of Kaliakoir Police Station.

The train stopped after dragging the bus half kilometer ahead, leaving two of its passengers dead, he added.

One of the dead was identified as Masud Rana, 35.

Locals rescued the injured and took them to Kaliakoir Upazila Health Complex.

Md Shajahan, stationmaster of Joydevpur Rail Station of Gazipur, said the train services between Dhaka and the northern districts resumed around 9:30am yesterday morning after a team from the local fire service removed the bus from the rail tracks.

(Our correspondents from Moulvibazar and Gazipur contributed to the report.)

Ancient skeleton

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Investigations have shown that she was between 30 and 45 years old and died more than 5,000 years ago.

That means that she lived during the same period as Oetzi the Iceman, the stunningly preserved corpse found by tourists in the Alps in the 1990s.

“You can compare Oetzi and the Lady of Bietikow in terms of age,” said Philipp Roskoschinski, one of the two archaeologists who made the discovery in the state of Brandenburg, which surrounds Berlin.

Oetzi was found by two hikers in 1991 in the Oetztal Alps on the border between Austria and Italy.

His body was extremely well preserved, with organs, skin and other organic material still intact -- researchers were even able to see what he had eaten hours before he died.

“The discovery of Oetzi was much more spectacular due to the conditions of preservation,” Roskoschinski said.

All that is left of Lady Bietikow are bones and some fragments of clothing, but researchers have still managed to piece together some details about her life.

It was during the Neolithic period that humans first introduced grains into their diet, since they could be stored more easily than meat and could also be used as a means of payment, according to anthropologist Bettina Jungklaus.