INTERNATIONAL

Azerbaijan troops on the edge of Karabakh stronghold

People in Stepanakert 'hiding' in basements

AFP, Yerevan

Azerbaijani troops are on the edge of Nagorno-Karabakh's separatist Stepanakert, prompting residents to hide in basements in fear, a rebel envoy told AFP yesterday.

"The situation in Stepanakert is horrible, Azerbaijani troops are all around the city, they are on the outskirts and people fear Azerbaijani soldiers could enter the city at any moment and start killings," separatist spokeswoman Armine Hayrapetyan

Hayrapetyan, who represents the separatist government's information centre in Yerevan, said Stepanakert and other parts of Nagorno-Karabakh have lost most basic services since lightning offensive



recapture the ethnically Armenian

"No electricity, no gas, no food, no fuel, no internet and telephone connection," Hayrapetyan said. "People are hiding in basements."

Armenian separatists agreed to lay down their arms in the face of clashes that they said killed 200 people.

They held an initial round of Russian-mediated integration talks with Azerbaijani representatives on Thursday.

"We have so many casualties, dead and wounded people," Hayrapetyan said, without providing details.

The separatists said yesterday they were negotiating the withdrawal of their troops from the disputed

International pressure mounted on Azerbaijan to re-open the only road leading to Armenia, dubbed the Lachin Corridor, so that supplies and people can move in and

The fighting has been marked by abuses on both sides and there are fears of a new refugee crisis among lagorno-Karabakh's estimated 120.000 ethnic-Armenian residents.



Migrants wait to disembark from a Spanish coast guard vessel, in the port of Arguineguin, in the island of Gran Canaria, Spain yesterday. Pope Francis yesterday arrived in the French port city of Marseille for a two-day visit focused on the Mediterranean and migration, and bringing a message of tolerance amid bitter debate over how Europe manages asylum seekers.

China's recent military movements 'abnormal'

Says Taiwan, flags amphibious drills

REUTERS, Taipei

Recent Chinese military movements around Taiwan were "abnormal", the island's defence minister said yesterday, flagging amphibious exercises in addition to drills Taipei has observed in the province facing the island. Taiwan has reported an increase in such

activity during the past week, as dozens of fighters, drones, bombers and other aircraft, as well as warships, have operated

China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has in recent years carried out many such drills around the island, seeking to assert its sovereignty claims and pressure Taipei.

"Our initial analysis is that they are doing joint drills in September, including land, sea, air and amphibious," Defence Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng told reporters at parliament. The "recent enemy situation is quite abnormal", he added.

statement from the defence ministry on destroyed, Chieh said. Thursday that it was keeping watch on Chinese activities near Dacheng Bay in the to carry out a frontal, amphibious invasion crossing it last year.

This is an area where Taiwan security sources say China performs landing drills.

China has not said anything about the drills around Taiwan, and its defence than 100 military ships for regional ministry did not respond to two requests for comment.

Chiu said releasing the information about Dacheng Bay was in line with his ministry's principle of keeping the public informed.

China carried out landing drills in Dacheng Bay in September last year and the year before that, said Chieh Chung, a military researcher at Taiwan's National Policy Foundation think tank.

Those exercises featured civilian ships with equipment practising "dockless unloading", to simulate a situation in which they might need to land after port The comments came after an unusual facilities are knocked out of action or

southern province of Fujian, facing Taiwan. of the island, given geographic difficulties, a senior US defence official told Congress on Tuesday.

Last week China also dispatched more exercises in areas such as strategic waters in the South China Sea and off Taiwan's northeast coast, a regional

security official told Reuters on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

China traditionally performs large-scale exercises from July to September. Taiwan's defence ministry has said. vesterday,

ministry said it had detected 24 Chinese military aircraft entering Taiwan's air defence identification zone

during the previous 24 hours, with at least 17 crossing the median line of the Taiwan Strait, according to a map it published.

The median line used to serve as an unofficial barrier between the two sides until China's air force began regularly

First big grain ship leaves Ukraine's port

The first big ship carrying grain from a Ukrainian Black Sea port has set sail since Moscow quit a deal in July to allow exports, a Ukrainian deputy prime minister said yesterday, part of Kyiv's campaign to break Russia's de facto blockade. The Aroyat "left the port Chornomorsk after loading 17,600 (tonnes of) Ukrainian wheat for Egypt,' Oleksandr Kubrakov said on the X social media app, formerly Twitter. He posted a photo of the ship at sea. It was the second of two bulk carriers to leave the port this week using what Kyiv calls a new temporary humanitarian corridor. The first, the much smaller Resilient Africa, left on Tuesday, testing the route with a cargo of just 3,000 tonnes. Five vessels have left so far using the corridor, which hugs the Romanian and Bulgarian coasts. After invading Ukraine last year, Moscow closed off the Black Sea ports from one of the world's biggest suppliers of grain, in what Kyiv and its Western backers called an attempt to use global food supplies as blackmail. Moscow said the ports could bring in weapons. In a separate incident, at least one Ukrainian missile struck the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea navy in the Crimean port of Sevastopol yesterday, causing a fire, local governor Mikhail Razvozhayev wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

INDIA'S MANIPUR STATE After protests, 5 men arrested under stringent law get bail

NDTV ONLINE

In a rare occurrence, bail has been given to five men in Manipur despite them being charged under sections of the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The bail order comes after the Indian state's capital, Imphal, saw nearly a week of protests and shutdowns over their arrest. Granting conditional bail to the men, one of whom is a former cadre of the banned insurgent outfit People's Liberation Army of Manipur, the special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court observed that the investigating officer could not provide strong prima facie evidence of the accused being involved in terror activities. The court also took note of the protests being held for the unconditional release of the accused. The five men were arrested on September 16 after they were found driving an SUV in a suspicious manner. A check revealed that they were wearing the camouflage uniforms used by security forces and had several sophisticated weapons on them. Several rounds of ammunition were also recovered from the car. Since the ethnic violence broke out in May, there have been several instances of armed people donning the uniforms of security forces and attacking villages or firing

Session jam dashing

University teachers evaluate scripts and prepare tabulation as part of their job responsibilities.'

He also said they have been working on the automation of the tabulation system. SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS AND

INFRASTRUCTURE

poor Teacher shortage and infrastructure -- shortage of classrooms, teachers and labs are common problems, affecting the quality of education in all the seven colleges.

The DU authorities in September last year formed a committee to enquire about the current state of education in the seven colleges. A member of the committee, on condition of anonymity, said Suhrawardy College has the worst situation of all. The situation is almost similar at Kabi Nazrul Government College, he added.

THE AIM OF QUALITY EDUCATION Educationists believe the DU authorities have more to do to address

the issues that have arisen. "The DU authorities have not taken any significant initiative to resolve the crises and ensure quality education in the colleges," said Siddiqur Rahman, former Professor of Dhaka University's Institute of

Education and Research (IER). As these are tertiary-level educational institutions, the DU

AL 'peace rally' FROM PAGE 12

government, as per party insiders. They, however, think the BNP's movement will lose momentum once the election schedule is declared. as there is no way to jeopardise

the election once the election commission takes charge. Thus, the party has issued strict instructions to party men to actively participate in all the upcoming

programmes. "You've been working hard, I am urging you to continue that hard work for the next 40 days," AL Organising Secretary Mirza Azam told an extended meeting of the Dhaka city (north) AL on Thursday.

authorities should take steps to increase the capacity of teachers at the seven colleges, including arranging training sessions for them, he stressed.

Commenting on the challenges the DU teachers are facing, DU PRO-VC Kamal said it is true that the seven colleges were affiliated with the DU to improve quality of education but the decision was implemented without any proper planning. He said the committee which

probed the state of education at the colleges will hold meetings with the higher authorities regarding its findings and press for addressing teacher shortage and infrastructural issues.

Trudeau

FROM PAGE 12

there is evidence suggesting Indian government involvement in Nijjar's death. India's Ministry of External Affairs did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment on the CBC report.

The report said the intelligence included communications involving Indian officials, among them Indian diplomats present in Canada, adding that some of the intelligence was provided by an unidentified ally in the Five Eves alliance.

Five Eyes is an intelligence-sharing network that includes the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The United States is in touch with both Canada and India over Ottawa's allegations, US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Thursday, confirming for the first time that Washington was talking to New Delhi about the matter.

"There's not some exemption you get for actions like this," Sullivan told reporters when asked about Trudeau's statement about possible Indian involvement. "It is a matter of concern for us, it is something we take seriously."

US President Joe Biden and several members of the Five Eyes raised the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi when they met at the G20 this month, the Financial Times reported.

US to back PM

"US-Bangladeshi cooperation on the [Rohingva] response is a powerful example of the partnership between the United States and Bangladesh."

Meanwhile, Washington on Thursday announced that it would provide \$74 million to support Rohingya refugees and their host communities.

Including this, the US assistance since August 2017 for those affected by the crisis in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and the region has crossed \$2.2 billion, said a statement issued by the State Department.

This funding provides lifesustaining support to nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, many of them survivors of a campaign of genocide, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing, and 540,000 members of Bangladeshi communities that generously host Rohingya refugees, it said.

Khaleda Zia FROM PAGE 12

including arthritis, diabetes, kidney issues, liver problems, and heart diseases for a long time, said the medical board.

On September 12, the government extended the suspension of Khaleda's jail sentence by six more months with the same two conditions as before -- she would not be able to go abroad and she would have to receive treatment in the country.

Khaleda was freed from jail on March 25, 2020, after the government suspended her jail sentence for six months. She was released during a time when the world was grappling with the pandemic.

The BNP chief landed in jail on February 8, 2017, after being sentenced to five years' imprisonment by a special court in Dhaka in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case. On October 30, the following

year, the High Court enhanced her punishment to 10 years after dismissing her appeal. The former prime minister was convicted by another special court in Dhaka in the Zia Charitable Trust

corruption case on October 29, 2018.

She was sentenced to seven years'

imprisonment by the court.

Measures not enough to check waterlogging

Experts say a comprehensive and sustainable drainage network is urgently needed for a lasting solution.

Rainwater should naturally flow into water bodies and open and underground drains should also carry water to canals that lead to the rivers, they said.

"The drainage system in Dhaka city is inadequate. Even normal rainfall exceeds its capacity, let alone a rainfall of 113 millimeters, which is quite substantial," Prof Md Mujibur Rahman, a teacher of civil engineering department at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, told The Daily Star.

system, he stressed.

"If we can free all the canals from them properly, water will flow away quickly," Prof Mujibur said. He suggested modernisation of the drainage system should be done after taking into consideration the infrastructure was developed in 103 changes in the weather pattern.

Currently, Dhaka has a network of 2.211 kilometres of drains, with 961km in the south and 1,250-km in the north part of the city.

When WASA looked after the Additionally, the drainage system's canals, efforts primarily focused on not collect anywhere for a long time design is not up to the mark. It open drains. However, the ongoing as before," he said.

explains why the storm drainage efforts by the city corporations capacity is overwhelmed due to encompass both canals and drains, various types of waste. All these requiring substantial financial reasons contribute to clogging the allocation, said sources at the DSCC and DNCC.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor encroachments and re-excavate Taposh said infrastructure was developed in 136 locations in the last 3 years at a cost of Tk 225 crore from their own funds. "Of those locations, sewerage

> places," he said. DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam claimed

that the situation has improved significantly because of various measures they have taken.

"Even if it rains heavily, water does

We are not worried

politics. We requested them to refrain from such activities. They have given us assurances," he said. He said Bangladesh has already

been addressing the concerns that the US has, including accountability of Rab.

"We have communicated these and other areas of cooperation [with the US government]," he added.

The state minister also hoped that the opposition parties will not engage in violence now that the US has begun enforcing the visa policy. "We have seen that the opposition parties in the past resorted to serious level of violence. Now we can see that the opposition party leaders are coming under the US visa policy."

On the European Union's decision not to send a fully-fledged election observation team, he said Bangladesh will welcome any alternative observers from the EU. "We are open and will welcome any other options."

Extend LDC trade benefit

graduate into a developing nation from a least developed country (LDC) The UK has already announced

that it will allow duty-free imports from Bangladesh till 2029. Faruque in the letter also said the

RMG sector was still suffering from post-pandemic problems, especially the disruption in buyers' sourcing pattern and abnormal inflation due to fuel price hike. The RMG makers, he said, also

need to prepare themselves with right investments and readjustment of their facilities. The BGMEA chief wanted

clarification on the rules of "origin requirements" under both Least Developed Countries Framework and Enhanced Framework, particularly for the apparel items.

He said information on any especially with regard to product BGMEA chief said.

graduation, border requirements, and safeguard measures, would be The UK is the third largest apparel

export destination for Bangladesh. The country exported RMG products worth \$5.02 billion to the UK in 2022-23 fiscal year, which was 11.78 percent higher than the previous fiscal year.

Faruque said in the past decade Bangladesh has made significant strides in ensuring the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of the RMG

The RMG industry is progressively transitioning towards greener and cleaner production methods, with an impressive 202 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified green factories, he added.

This commitment to sustainability has made Bangladesh's RMG sector further changes between the new one of the most compliant and scheme and the GSP scheme, trusted industries globally, the