

Unilateral Iraq strike to be violation of UN Charter

Moscow warns Washington

AFP, Baghdad

Russia warned Washington Saturday that it would be violating the United Nations Charter if it attacked Iraq without a UN mandate, as Baghdad destroyed more banned missiles and warheads under UN supervision.

Iraq's push for disarmament compliance followed a draft resolution given the UN Security Council Friday by the United States, Britain and Spain, which would give Baghdad a March 17 deadline to fully disarm or face military action.

Although the resolution -- with three of the five veto-wielding

council members against it -- stood little chance of passage, US President George W. Bush reiterated his resolve to go to war alone.

"We don't really need United Nations approval," he said late in the week, although his government says it would much prefer to have the approval of the international community.

Russia labelled the March 17 line in the sand unnecessary and unjustified and echoed a threat from France, which also has a veto on the council, to block any resolution authorising the use of force.

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov warned that "if the United States unilaterally launched a

military strike on Iraq without a UN mandate, it would be in violation of the UN charter," in which case the Security Council would have to "make appropriate decisions."

In Baghdad, the UN inspectors' spokesman said Iraq had scrapped a further six of its banned Al-Samoud 2 missiles after a day's pause, raising to 40 the number of the missiles destroyed since the operation began a week ago.

"Six more Al-Samoud 2 missiles were destroyed, along with three warheads," spokesman Hiro Ueki said.

Iraq officials have said about 100 of the rockets were made.

Bush derided those efforts as a

"willful charade" to thwart UN inspectors.

He also rejected an assessment by chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix that the destruction of the banned missiles represented "substantial" disarmament.

"Our intelligence shows that even as he (Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein) is destroying these few missiles, he has ordered the continued production of the very same type of missiles," Bush said in his weekly radio address.

Iraq described Blix's report as

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PHOTO: STAR

Police club 11-party activists (left) on their way to a meeting at Muktangan in Dhaka and takes a loudspeaker from the meeting venue yesterday. The party has called a dawn to dusk hartal across the country today.

SUST teachers begin indefinite strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The teachers of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) yesterday began an indefinite strike to press for eight-point demand including resignation of the vice-chancellor.

No classes and examinations were held due to the strike.

The strikers brought out a silent procession and held a rally on the campus. They also staged a sit-in in front of the administrative building.

Chaired by Dr Akhtarul Islam, acting president of the Shahjalal University Teachers Association, the rally was addressed, among others, by Professor Dr Muhammad Jafar Iqbal, Dr Mohammad Yunus, Dr Kabir Hossain and Dr Abdul Awal Biswas.

5 Padma staff remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five of the 13 employees of the Padma state guest house arrested in connection with the mysterious appearance of a person at the room of visiting Myanmar Foreign Minister U Wing Aung on the night of March 2 were placed on two days' remand yesterday.

Police produced all the 13 before the CMM's court but sought remand for five of them. They are Alamgir Hossain, Nurul Islam, Nurul Amin, Golam Rabbani and Lutfor Rahman. The rest were sent to Dhaka Central Jail.

In the forwarding report, the investigation officer (IO) of the case said valuable information were gathered regarding the incident, but more interrogation of the accused was needed.

Wing Aung, who came to Dhaka on March 2 on a two-day visit, left the state guesthouse at about midnight, complaining that somebody entered his room.

On that night, he had told the security personnel at the state guest house that he did not feel safe there and wanted to go to the residence

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New trade deal likely to be finalised at Delhi talks

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh and India are likely to finalise a new bilateral trade agreement during the two-day commerce-secretary level trade talks scheduled for a March 24 start in New Delhi.

A bilateral investment agreement will also be tabled during the talks since New Delhi has long been asking for such a deal, according to commerce ministry sources.

The existing trade agreement, signed in 1980, was last extended for four months in last month. Dhaka had been seeking some changes in the agreement as it said the accord was not 'serving equally interests of both sides'.

Dhaka finalised the draft of the new trade agreement and sent it to New Delhi in 2001. But differences with New Delhi on the nitty-gritty

of the draft delayed finalisation of the agreement.

"We have narrowed down our differences on the trade agreement and expecting to finalise it during the talks," a source in the Indian High Commission in Dhaka said.

Apart from its demand for a zero-tariff access for its goods, Bangladesh would press for removing the non-tariff and para-tariff barriers on its products to Indian markets during the talks.

Dhaka would also ask New Delhi to allow it to open two trade missions and a few branches of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) in some important towns in the northeastern Indian states.

Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmad will lead a six-member Bangladeshi delegation for trade talks with the Indian side to be led by his counterpart Dipak

Chatterjee.

Commerce ministry meets today to discuss different issues that would come up during the trade talks. Officials of different ministries and business people will attend the meeting, according to sources.

Opinions would be invited on New Delhi's proposal for opening a branch office of the State Bank of India in Chittagong and starting production of an Indian pharmaceutical industry in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, businesses of the two countries today start a discussion in New Delhi on the bilateral trade and business issues ahead of the trade talks. A delegation of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) leaves the country for New Delhi

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PHOTO: IQBAL SIDDIQUEE

A local fisherman sets a fishing net in the Tanguar Hoar, an ecologically vulnerable site, in Sunamganj.

Private investors on Tanguar Hoar

One party places three proposals

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

A tender after three years of uncertainty on appointing private investors to protect the ecologically vulnerable Tanguar Hoar in Sunamganj attracted the least response.

Only one party submitted three proposals on February 22. But one of the proposals by Nozir Hossain, a local lawmaker of the ruling BNP, lacks technical offers.

The same lawmaker earlier opposed the idea of leasing the hoar out, arguing that it goes against the concept of conservation.

The district authorities sent the proposals to the environment and forest ministry for consideration, said an official yesterday.

The first tender was invited on January 15, 2002 and suspended on a ministerial order.

The hoar was zoned as a Ramsar site in 2000 after it had been declared ecologically vulnerable in 1999.

According to the protection plan, several investors will be selected for three years and local management bodies will be formed with stakeholders.

The plan is to protect wildlife, restore habitats for fish and raise conservation awareness among locals.

The Tanguar Hoar is the biggest sanctuary in Bangladesh for fishes.

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Tk 92 lakh goods, forex seized at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials at the Zia International Airport seized US dollars and electronic goods worth about Tk 92 lakh Saturday night.

A team of customs stopped Ziaul Amin Khan, and recovered 20,500 US dollars from his possession. Khan, a Bangladeshi-British, was stopped at the boarding bridge 5, prior to his departure by a Singapore Airlines flight--SQ-435 at 10:00pm.

Khan told the customs officials that he was engaged in business with a Singapore company, Seba Vision, and was carrying the money to pay it to the company. Khan was holding a British passport (PGBR-025005648, dated November 27, 1996).

"The passenger was not carrying any declaration against the dollars," a customs official at the ZIA said.

The passenger was allowed to leave the country but the customs seized the money and deposited it to the customs warehouse. A departmental case was filed in this regard.

In another incident, customs officials recovered 556 pieces of mobile phone, 58 mini cassettes and other electronic goods worth about Tk 80 lakh. Mobile chargers, mobile batteries and video camera batteries were among the consignment.

The Dragon Air flight 110 landed at the ZIA at 1:00am. After clearing the luggage, a customs team found 21 unclaimed bags.

Later, those bags were opened in front of the representatives of different agencies at the airport, and a list of the goods was prepared.

The customs officials seized the goods and filed a departmental case in this regard.

RAT nabs gang leader from city slum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Team (RAT) of police nabbed Mejbah Uddin Tipu, gang leader of the infamous "Tipu Bahini", and five of his accomplices from a slum at Mohakhali on Saturday.

Tipu's five accomplices were identified as Monir Hossain, Abul Khayer, Amir Hossain, Rafiqul Islam Khokon and Mahfuzur Rahman Palash.

Police said Tipu was an abscondee in various cases.

Members of the RAT also arrested three people from the Karwan Bazar area Saturday night on charge of toll extortion from goods truck.

The arrestees were identified as Jamal Hossain, Badal Hossain and Mohammad Ali.

A case was filed against them with the Tejgaon Police Station.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Mar 10		6-06 pm
Mar 11	6-13 am	

Prayer Timings		
Mar 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-32	5-00
Maghrib	6-13	6-20
Esha	7-35	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

Business leaders want 'proper use' of taxpayers' money

STAR REPORT

Business leaders yesterday raised questions about the government expenditure and demanded proper use of taxpayers' money.

They said they are would not mind paying more taxes provided the money is properly utilised.

"We want to contribute to the state coffers. At the same time we want to be sure that our money is being spent for the real development, not for maintaining a 60-member jumbo cabinet," said one of the leaders during a meeting with the officials of the National

Board of Revenue (NBR). NBR Chairman Dr Shueb Ahmed was present.

The VAT monitoring cell of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and the Commissionerate of Customs, Excise and VAT (Dhaka South) arranged the meeting at the FBCCI auditorium.

FBCCI President Yussuf Abdullah Harun presided over the meeting. NBR Member (VAT) AK Reazul Karim was also present.

Responding to the business leaders, the NBR chairman said

revenue collection has become the most thankless job for them. "It is true that the business people try to avoid paying taxes. It is also true that the tax collectors are often rude and don't want to listen to their problems," he added.

Despite all these, everybody has a responsibility to pay tax to help continue the development activities. Taxpayers should not think that tax collectors are their opponents, he added.

If any taxpayer has any specific allegations against any tax official,

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Armed attack in Rupsha

OC closed, 10 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Abu Bakr, officer-in-charge (OC) of Rupsha thana, has been closed to the police lines and suspended on charge of negligence of duty during Friday's armed attack in Bagmara village that left eight persons injured, sources said.

The suspension order was issued from the DIG Range office on Saturday night.

OC Abu Baker is the third police officer suspended in connection with the incident; SI Abdul Majid and ASI Shafiqur Rahman were suspended earlier on Friday on the same charge.

Ten people have so far been

shown arrested in connection with the attack. They are Kamal, 20, Yunus Sardar, 40, Abu Shaikh, 40, Murad Shaikh, 20, Mahbub, 38, Akram Ali, 22, Saiful Islam Palak, 23, Babu Shaikh, 26, Juman, 30, and Billal, 28.

Jumman and Billal are cadres of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), police said.

A case was filed yesterday with the Rupsha thana by a relative of the injured Rupsha upazila BNP leader Mohiuddin Shaikh. None however was accused in the case.

Local people say the attempt on the life of Mohiuddin is a sequel to an intra-party rivalry over the leadership of Rupsha-Bagerhat

Minibus Owners' Association. Mohiuddin, who is general secretary of the association, has had strained relations with his rival group for a year now over toll collection from minibuses plying the Rupsha-Bagerhat route.

The trouble began when Mohiuddin reduced the per trip toll from Tk 70 to Tk 40 through his authority as association general secretary, minibus owners said.

In January, Mohiuddin received a death threat from two leaders of his rival group in BNP, but OC Abu Bakr reportedly refused to register a

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