

Islamic nations grumble over UN Iraq vote

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur
Muslim leaders winding up a summit yesterday grumbled over a United Nations resolution on Iraq while criticising a US vote to impose trade sanctions on Baghdad's neighbour Syria.

The UN unanimously adopted a resolution on Thursday aimed at getting troops and cash for Iraq, a diplomatic victory for the United States' efforts to broaden backing for its occupation.

In a late shift, a band of reluctant Security Council members backed the text, though France, Russia and Germany said it conceded too little on their demands for a greater UN

role in Iraq for them to commit further troops or cash.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Maher told reporters it was for the United States to pick up the pieces in Iraq.

"It's not our job to raise money. The main responsibility is the responsibility of the occupying power," he said on the way into the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting.

But Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, appointed by the US-backed Governing Council, welcomed the vote.

"It's very good news for the Iraqi people that the international community and the Security Council are

united behind the need to stabilise Iraq and to create a better future for the Iraqi people," he told reporters at the summit.

Iyad Allawi, who heads the Iraqi council, criticised France, Germany and Russia for ignoring the new administration's views.

"As if we are pupils in a primary school, they want us to report to the Security Council. Unfortunately, they have not consulted with us," he said.

In preparatory meetings for the Putrajaya summit, the Iraqi council defied OIC ministers' efforts to push a resolution setting a timetable for US forces to quit the country, saying the UN text was paramount to improving the security situation.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia talks bilateral issues with Iranian President Seyed Mohammad Khatami at Putrajaya Conference Centre in Malaysia on the sidelines of the Organisation of Islamic Conference meet yesterday.

Mahathir's remarks

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"I said in Malay that I regretted or felt sad that the speech was taken out of context. In English I said I'm sorry that the speech was taken out of context, that the whole thing was taken out of context."

"That is not saying I'm sorry for the speech made by the prime minister. I did not say that."

Syed Hamid blamed the Western media's "fondness for spin" for the reports that he had apologised.

"Their fondness of twisting the truth has become a habit."

Reuters adds: Malaysia voiced regret yesterday over the outcry caused by Mahathir's remarks, saying Islam was not anti-Jewish and the problem was Israel.

"Islam has never advocated being anti anybody including the Jews", Albar said.

"The only problem with the Jews is when the State of Israel was created," Syed Hamid said, adding that Jews worked and were welcomed in Malaysia.

"We cannot fight them through brawn alone, we must use our brains also," he said.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Maher said he did not think much attention should be paid to the "clamour and accusations" from western countries.

"Those who are commenting on the speech have not read it in its entirety," Maher said.

"Nobody felt it was inflammatory. We thought it was a very, very wise assessment. It was addressed to the Muslims, it was an appeal for them to wake up."

Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai said Mahathir was just "talking about issues confronting the Muslim world and what Muslims should do. Muslims must educate themselves, must begin to be progressive to develop themselves."

"His historical analysis of what happened in Islam is very correct."

But the statements about Jews stood out, and condemnations were swift and unambiguous from the United States, the European Union, Australia and Germany, which summoned Malaysia's charge d'affaires in Berlin to protest the comments as "totally unacceptable."

US State Department spokesman Adam Ereli called Mahathir's remarks offensive and inflammatory. "We view them with the contempt and derision they deserve," he said.

The leaders of the European Union, meeting in Brussels, Belgium, planned to adopt a statement saying the 15-nation bloc "deeply deplores" Mahathir's words, Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said.

"The prime minister used expressions that were gravely offensive, very strongly anti-Semitic and ... strongly counter to principles of tolerance, dialogue and understanding between the Western world and the Islamic world," Frattini said.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard called Mahathir's comments offensive and repugnant.

"Any suggestion from anybody anywhere in the world of dividing the world into Jewish and non-Jewish groupings is historically indefensible and wrong," Howard told Australia Radio.

River-link plan

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at diverting waters from overflowing common rivers during monsoon and not during the lean or dry season.

He was talking to the journalists on the sidelines of a two-day Nepal-India water resources cooperation meeting in the Nepalese capital.

The meeting that has brought together civil society members, government officials, engineers and experts both from India and Nepal is being dubbed as the "Track II Meeting" supported by BP Koirala Foundation.

The meeting coincides with another South Asian consultation in the same city drawing participants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan mainly to focus on the Indian giant project and its fallout on the entire region.

Echoing many Indian leaders Verghese said India was still at a 'conceptual stage' on the project.

As his attention was drawn to taskforce chairman Suresh Prabhu's fund-seeking from foreign sources, Verghese said, "Prabhu's fund-seeking does not mean India won't consult with co-riparians."

Asked why Indians, rights groups and activists were also opposing the river-link project, he said: "They are opposing high-dams. There are people who oppose the concept of high-dams, be it linked to the project or not."

Earlier in a paper on 'Nepal's Paradox: Nature's Promise Unredeemed', Verghese also touched on the river-link issue.

"To the extent necessary and feasible, harnessing the Himalayan component will entail storage in Nepal and Bhutan, such as those long discussed, together with optimisation of possible inter-basin transfer alignments," he said.

"This in turn will require mutually beneficial and cooperative arrangements with these neighbours as well as Bangladesh. Since the prime objective is augmentation of lean season supplies, Bangladesh too would be a beneficiary."

Meanwhile, the South Asian consultation on water issues began with the unanimous call for taking regional approaches in sharing common river waters so that no co-riparian country is affected.

The three-day meet at Nepal Administrative Staff College also called upon the South Asian countries sharing common rivers to oblige to the treaties and international laws instead of taking up any project unilaterally.

Over 100 experts, policy planners, academics, lawyers, engineers, journalists and NGO activists

ists from Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan and India gathered at the meet, 'South Asia Consultation on Water: Options and Challenges', organised by the South Asian Solidarity for Rivers and People (SARP) and Water and Energy Users' Federation of Nepal (WAFED).

The participants expressed deep concern at the way India is going ahead with the mega water project without any consultation with co-riparians like Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

Former water resources minister of Nepal Dipak Gyawali made the keynote deliberation with SARP coordinator Roy Laifungbam of Manipur, India, presiding over the inaugural session.

After WAFED Coordinator Gopal Siwakoti Chintan's introductory remarks, its Director Neeru Shrestha delivered welcome speech.

Representative from Bangladesh, Engineer Muhammad Hilaluddin, chief director of Angkor Bangladesh and Indian representative Dr Sudhender Sharma, director of ecological foundation, also highlighted respective country perspectives on the issue.

Later on the day, Nasser Ejazul Huq, who teaches geological sciences at Jahangirnagar University, chaired a session and gave floor to Dhaka University teacher Asif Nazrul and Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA) representative Bahreen Khan to speak on legal aspects of river water issues.

Samir Dosani of NGO Forum from Manila and Chetendra Himali, a Nepalese activist, also spoke on different perspectives.

Earlier in the morning, in his keynote speech Gyawali said: "We've not been formally informed by the Indian government about its plan on river inter-link scheme. Officially Nepal's stand is that India can do whatever it likes to within its territory as long that does not harm Nepal."

"But unofficially, I'll say the river-link project will cause damages to India itself."

Hilaluddin said in the name of diverting water to water-starved areas of a country, one should not cause disaster to other country.

He called on the governments in South Asian nations to take lessons from water-sharing arrangements of Mekong and Danube rivers.

The Bangladesh representative also called for bringing reforms to the SAARC charter paving the way for discussion of bilateral issues in the forum.

Ten killed in Indian mine accident

REUTERS, Hyderabad
Ten miners were killed and two injured when the roof of a coal mine collapsed in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh on Friday, a mine company official said.

TRK Rao, executive director of Singareni Collieries Company Ltd, said the accident occurred in Godavarikhani village about 170 km (105 miles) from of the state capital, Hyderabad.

"About a dozen miners were trapped due to the roof collapse. Two people were taken out alive," he said.

This is the second accident in Singareni Collieries in the past four months. In June, 17 miners drowned when a mine in the same area was suddenly flooded with water.

Time to show strength

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people of different faiths."

She said the world must realise that to ensure sustained peace, stability and harmony among peoples and communities, it is imperative to understand Islam, not alienate it.

Reaffirming her government's clear stand to fight terrorism in all its forms, the PM said Bangladesh has consistently stated that terrorism and killing of innocent civilians cannot be an option for pursuing any cause.

She called for fighting terrorism on a multi-pronged strategy without solely relying on military options. "We are opposed to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We also believe that the fight against terrorism should be based on a sound strategy that is multi-pronged and relies not on military option alone."

The prime minister said Bangladesh joins the international community in its fight against terrorism as well as reaffirms its total commitment to the OIC Plan of Action on Terrorism adopted in Kuala Lumpur last year.

On the grave situation in Middle East, the prime minister said Bangladesh would continue to support all peace initiatives for an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital upholding the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

On the post-war Iraq, she said Iraqi people must be allowed to choose their government reflecting the opinion of all segments of the population and ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity.

She said Muslim Ummah must take a more active role in the reconstruction of Iraq along with the United Nations. "In our own modest

way, Bangladesh stands in readiness to assist Iraqi people in all possible ways," she told the summit leaders.

On the current situation in Palestine, she expressed serious concern that the Palestinian people are still in a state of grave uncertainty and "continue to suffer the repression of Israeli occupation and sustained military action."

Khaleda Zia urged the international community to use all possible means to "compel Israel to heed the voice of reason and give peace a real chance."

The prime minister urged leaders of the OIC countries to send out a very strong message of their determination, unity and solidarity by responding to the call of the hour.

"We must revert to our original resolve to speak in one voice. We must be able to mainstream the OIC in international affairs. Our first task is to revitalise the organisation," she said, adding that it is "meaningless to adopt resolutions, which ultimately go unimplemented."

Khaleda said it is a waste of time to debate on issues which go unheeded. "We need to do some good housekeeping. We must, therefore, make every effort to revitalise the organisation with a new vision and a target-oriented agenda."

Calling for best utilisation of material and human resources possessed by the Muslim Ummah, she called for aggressive investment in human resources and future generation through advanced education in science and technology to face the new global challenges.

In this context, the prime minister referred to her government's continued support to the Islamic University of Technology in Gazipur, a subsid-

ary body of the OIC. She said contributions from many member countries to the Islamic University have not been regular, seriously restraining its capacity to fulfil its task.

On economic scenario facing the Muslim Ummah, Khaleda Zia said a great majority of more than one billion of the world's Muslim population lives in poverty. Many of the OIC countries continue to suffer from stiff restrictions and tariff barriers. These hinder access of their goods into the international market.

"This must change. As a first step, we must strengthen cooperation within ourselves," she said, adding that intra-OIC economic interactions remain at a very low level. She requested the wealthier members of the OIC to invest and set up joint ventures in OIC countries that offer cheaper labour.

Khaleda Zia said liberalisation of trade and easier access of goods and services into the markets of OIC member countries would also strengthen the Ummah's position in the global context.

Reaffirming firm commitment to the OIC, the prime minister formally announced the name of Bangladesh's candidate Salauddin Quader Chowdhury for the post of the OIC secretary general.

She said Chowdhury is a distinguished parliamentarian of Bangladesh and her advisor for parliamentary affairs, with the rank and status of a cabinet minister.

Seeking support of the OIC countries for Chowdhury, she said: "He is fully aware of the issues that face the Ummah. I have total confidence in his commitment and ability to head our organisation."

JCD threat

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"We have not taken a single pie from the contractors but all of us (JCD leaders) are being blamed for extortion. When we asked contractors about this, they said the JCD president and secretary have been realising toll from them for the last six months. Both are living a luxurious life," said a JCD leader on condition of anonymity.

Construction of the buildings involves about Tk 4 crore. Of this, Tk 83,28,000 has been allocated for construction of a 'B' type building, Tk 80,10,000 for a 'C' type building, Tk 86 lakh for two 'E' type buildings, Tk 80 lakh for two 'F' type buildings and about Tk 86 lakh for part of the life science faculty building.

Moreover, the two JCD leaders are also extracting toll from Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute and National Youth Centre for long, JCD insiders said.

The JCD president however denied the allegations against him.

On the post-war Iraq, she said Iraqi people must be allowed to choose their government reflecting the opinion of all segments of the population and ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity.

She said Muslim Ummah must take a more active role in the reconstruction of Iraq along with the United Nations. "In our own modest

4 US soldiers

FROM PAGE 12
reports of armed men congregating on a road near the Imam Abbas mosque after a 9 p.m. curfew, Central Command said. The two sides exchanged small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

Malik Kazim, a gunman who said he participated in the battle, said the fighting involved armored vehicles and Humvees that passed the offices of a senior Shiite cleric, Mahmood al-Hassani. The offices were guarded by at least 20 gunmen.

Karbala has been under curfew since Tuesday, and the US-Iraqi patrol ordered the gunmen inside the offices. When they refused, a shoot-out ensued, Kazim said.

He said intense gunfire lasted about a half-hour as the US-Iraqi patrol tried to "kill our master."

A man identifying himself as Abu Ali, an aide to al-Hassani, said the Americans opened fire "without any provocation or warning." Eight Iraqi guards were killed, he said.

Abu Ali said guards have been posted around al-Hassani's house since late August, when a car bomb in nearby Najaf killed another leading Shiite cleric and more than 80 other people.

Initial reports said the joint patrol was made up of Americans and Poles. But military officials said later no Poles were involved.

Private clinics snatch

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spine and brain injuries. Ward boys inside the outpatient department are often used as promoters of private clinic business. Waiting patients are often talked into seeking treatment at private clinics.

"Usually we get good commissions for patients with bone fractures as the clinic stay for the patient is longer than usual and the expenditures are also quite high," said another ambulance driver.

On average each clinic pays up to Tk 1,000 to a middleman who brings patients from the DMCH.

Jasim Uddin, who had suffered a fractured ankle, was unable to find a bed in the orthopaedic ward of the DMCH, and was instantly offered help at the main gate of the outpatient department by one of the ambulance drivers.

"Sir, would you like to get treatment at a private clinic? We have concessions and also better facilities with doctors on observation round the clock," came the offer.

"No, I would not like to go to a private clinic," the annoyed man in his mid-40s shouted at the drivers who circled him on his crutches.

Eventually, however, after a few minutes of harassment, Jasim conceded and boarded one of the ambulances.

The private ambulance drivers also prevent patients from hiring taxis to take them home upon release.

"We are forced to rent the ambulances parked outside the emergency gate of the hospital," said Shawkat Hossain, a relative of a patient released last week.

He continued, "I preferred to rent a taxi but one of the men identifying himself as an official of the ambulance rental business threatened the taxi driver not to carry any patients."

The taxis, parked close to the

emergency gate of the hospital, are never allowed to pick up patients. In the past, several taxis have been damaged while trying to pick up patients from the emergency gate of the hospital.

"There is a big gang from the hospital and private clinics at the emergency gate of the hospital who controls the ambulance business. We dare not speak out against the business. They enter our wards with trolleys and pick up patients right in front of us often without any release order," said a medical officer at the neurosurgery ward.

The health directorate has remained silent on the issue and never interfered. Contacted, a health directorate official said, "We have no business that takes place outside the boundary of the hospital. We are only concerned about what takes place inside."

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Final communiqué

FROM PAGE 1
terrorism with Islam and a perception that the so-called war on terrorists is in fact a war on Muslims.

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, in a statement read on his behalf at the summit, warned of rising hostility between Islam and the West, describing it as "ugly, dangerous and wrong."

Annan said Western governments must address the grievances of Muslims, while Islamic states needed to make greater efforts to overcome their problems.

Earlier, Islamic leaders called yesterday for the restoration of the sovereignty of Iraq to be accelerated, after dropping plans for a strongly worded resolution which was opposed by Iraqi leaders.

The draft resolution had called for a timetable for the departure of US-led occupation troops and for elections to be held but this was opposed by the US-appointed Governing Council.

The council's interim head Ayad Allawi attended the OIC summit in Malaysia's administrative capital and lobbied against the resolution.

The 57-member OIC also welcomed the US-sponsored UN Security Council resolution passed Thursday which authorises a multinational force in Iraq.

"The conference reaffirmed the need for all to respect Iraq's sovereignty, political independence, national unity and territorial integrity," the communiqué said at the end of the two-day summit.

It stressed the right of Iraqis to determine their own political future

and the need to "accelerate the restoration of the full sovereignty of Iraq."

It said the United Nations should play a central role in post-war Iraq.

Islamic nations also vowed at the end of a summit yesterday to "revitalise" an economic boycott of Israel in retaliation for its "aggressions" against Palestinians and other Arabs.

The summit "stressed commitment to apply the principles and laws of the Islamic Boycott of Israel, and action to revitalise its means," said the final communiqué.

The communiqué said the 57-member OIC will "make the legislations, regulations and rules that organise the work of the Islamic boycott of Israel as part of their respective national legislations in force."

Ctg doc

FROM PAGE 1
Anil to a hilltop tree and left the place. He managed to return home, they added.

However, mystery shrouds the incident, as some people claim that a ransom of Tk 11 lakh was paid, while some others term the incident an 'arranged drama'.

Anil's family denied the allegations.

Anil was quizzed by police.

Anil was reportedly abducted while returning home at Temuhuni from his chamber, Beauty Pharmacy, at Keranirhat under Satkania upazila.

His brother Swapan Chandra filed a case with Satkania Police Station.

Gala award ceremony

FROM PAGE 12
Anam said the purpose of the event was to publicly recognise and salute the high achievers of today and encourage those who are to follow to work hard to become similarly successful in future.

Anam called upon the achievers to translate their individual success into a collective effort for nation building.

"Please remember that a country is as good as its people, a people can only be good if its children are good, and children can be as good as the education they receive," he said.

He urged the students to make an individual pledge to serve humanity and the country. "There is no more dignity and honour than nation building. The collective knowledge power of young achievers present here today is enough to change the fate of the nation," he added.

PBTL Managing Director Faisal Morshed Khan congratulated the brilliant students and offered a 25 percent price reduction for the talented students and 10 percent for their parents and relatives for subscribing to CityCell.

The chief executive officer of Citibank N.A., Mamun Rashid, called upon the students to prepare for tough

Train derails

FROM PAGE 1
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Police sources admitted the casualties. The identity of the victims could not be known till filing of this report in the evening.

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Our Reply

The report did not mention that sponsors of the Darul Ihsan University were driven by business motive. The comment was made by a member of the inspection team on the overall situation of private universities, and not any particular one.



Dancers perform at the Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University yesterday marking the convocation of Chhayanaut, a cultural organisation.

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competition on the global market. O- and A-level students could serve well in the country's corporate sector, he added.

QM Shariful Ala, director of Mobil Jamuna Lubricant, congratulated the students on their achievement and urged them to keep up the good work.

Elizabeth Lowen, deputy managing director of EdExcell International, also spoke.

Rezwan Haque of S.F.X Greenherald International School, who secured 12 As in one sitting in O-level examinations under Cambridge University and Shakil Ahmed of Scholastica, who got 5 As in one sitting in A-level under the University of London spoke as representatives of the O- and A-level students.

Rezwan scored the highest mark in English language in the world and this is the first time a Bangladesh student achieved such a rare distinction.

The managing editor of The Daily Star, Syed Fahim Munaim, offered the vote of thanks to the sponsors, participants and their parents.

Elita Karim and Anama Biswas of The Daily Star conducted the nearly three-hour award-giving ceremony.