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# The Daily Star

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## WFP assures full support in tackling refugee crisis

# Rectify policies, Ghali asks Myanmar

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 6: Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today called on Myanmar to 'rectify' policies that caused refugees to flood into neighbouring Bangladesh, reports Reuters.

In a cautiously worded statement released through his spokesman, the Secretary-General said he was 'seriously concerned' that the crisis would 'threaten the stability of the region and increase human suffering.'

He said he strongly hoped Myanmar would take 'all necessary action to rectify the causes of this tragic situation.'

International relief organisation officials in Geneva fear Myanmar was turning into a 'killing field' with its military junta using horror tactics, in-

cluding murder and rape, to suppress or drive out rebellious national minorities.

The officials said accounts



Ghali: Concerned

by refugees pouring into neighbouring countries left little doubt the Myanmar army was engaged in a concerted campaign to eliminate real or potential opponents.

The office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the influx was reaching 'dramatic proportions' with thousands crossing the border daily.

UNB adds: The Myanmar troops have let loose an absolute reign of terror in the entire Arakan region, evicting the Rohingya Muslims from their homes and hearths, according to refugees who crossed into Bangladesh today.

Torture and persecution by the Myanmar military junta have been intensified in 10 of

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## 'Dhaka faces human disaster'

From Farid Hossain

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 6: The visiting representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) here today said that Bangladesh was heading for a 'human disaster' if the current rate of Myanmar refugee influx at 5,000 a day continued.

After visiting the Rohingya refugees, Jamsheed Anvar, Director of the UNHCR's Asia Bureau, said that it would be impossible to deal with such an enormous daily influx in an effective way.

Anvar, who arrived in the country Tuesday on a six-day trip, today visited nine camps in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts which could provide

shelters to only three quarters of more than 100,000 refugees who fled Myanmar because of ill treatment in their homeland.

The UNHCR official said "I would like to appeal on behalf of the High Commissioner to take steps to remove the causes forcing the people to flee their home in such a big number."

Asked if Myanmar was violating the human rights, Anvar said "if the stories being told by the refugees are true, then there is serious ground to suppose that violation of human rights is taking place."

However, he added that

there was no way to confirm or deny the stories because of lack of access to Myanmar.

When asked about the condition of the refugee camps, he said "there is no guarantee that we can prevent an epidemic."

"Despite excellent job being done by the government medical teams, the Medicine Sans Frontiers (MSF), Rabita and the Ganashasthya Kendro, we may have to face an epidemic because of the sheer number of people and lack of facilities."

But there has not yet been an outbreak of epidemic despite the overwhelming number, he said.

The UNHCR representative

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## Dissident leader says

# Coup in Myanmar imminent

By Nadeem Qadir

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 6: A Myanmar dissident leader has said that a military coup is imminent in Yangon by officers favouring restoration of democracy.

Mra Raza Linn, President of the National Democratic Forces of Arakan (NDF) in an interview with this correspondent said that there could be a coup any time because of growing differences within the military junta.

She made the comments on the basis of the reports from the intelligence and pro-democracy Myanmar officers. Claiming that a split between the junta leaders Saw Maung and Khin Nyunt — was growing. Both the generals were issuing contradictory statements, she added.

The NDF leader lives in the jungles from where she leads the pro-democracy movement.

The NDF is one of the 23 organisations which formed the Democratic Alliance of Burma in November, 1988, just after the present military junta seized power.

The military has run the country since then, ignoring people's verdict in favour of an alliance led by its leader Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi who is now under house arrest.

When asked how long they

have to wait for freedom, the ever smiling Mra Raza said "time is needed," and cited Bangladesh as an example which won independence after a long wait in 1971.

Mra Raza also hinted that there was dissent in the military.

"The majority of the defence forces support us and they are slowly getting restless... The eruption is not far away," she said, adding that a coup would have already taken place if junta leader General Saw Maung had not taken special steps to monitor the movement of all Burmese nationals.

She said the intelligence was very strong and had killed several defence officials who attempted a coup recently. She, however, could not specify exact date.

"Tha Kyaw, a Ne Win man, lost to National League of Democracy (NLD) in the Moby area where Myanmar Air and Navy Headquarters are based, and that proves that military voted for democracy," Mra Raza said.

She added that already a large number of military officers and soldiers had defected to the dissidents' side and they would be able to achieve their goals early if the world community 'isolated' Yangon

diplomatically and economically.

Ne Win, Myanmar's former President, is widely believed to be the power behind the junta.

Asked about current Dhaka-Yangon ties, Mra Raza said "I firmly believe that if the current government is truly democratic and respects human rights then it has to support us and also Aung San Suu Kyi."

The Dhaka government has maintained silence on Aung San's winning the prize, although the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party has congratulated her.

About China, a close ally of Myanmar, she said "Democracy will be established there too as no one can suppress any mass movement for long."

On the current Muslim Rohingya refugee problem in Bangladesh, she said it was part of the blueprint by the junta to 'Myanmarise' the country to bury future nationalistic and democratic campaigns.

"These people are also suppressed like us but Rohingya leadership seems to be taking the democratic movement on a religious basis... maybe because they get funds from the Arab world," Mra Raza said.

She said some 1,000 of her

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Montu-backers burning effigy of Amir Hossain Amu yesterday in front of Awami League central office. — Star photo

## Shootout on DU campus

By DU Correspondent

Tension gripped the Dhaka University campus yesterday as the armed workers BCL factions engaged in shootouts following the suspension of AL leader Mostafa Mohsin Montu.

Several rounds of gunshots were fired and crackers were blasted in the evening by both the groups creating panic among the general students.

Montu is the chief of the party's youth front, Bangladesh Jubo League.

The action was taken against Montu, also the General Secretary of Dhaka District Awami League, for his alleged involvement in the killing of the Chhatra League (S-A) Organising Secretary, Manti-uzzaman Badal, on last January 9 on the DU campus.

According to a source, the Montu-supported faction of the BCL (S-A), known as the 'third world' group, tried to enter the BCL (S-A) stronghold — Jagannath, Zahurul and Salmullah halls.

At that time, sporadic gunshots were heard from the Jagannath Hall, Dhaka Medical College and Vice Chancellor's House areas.

At that time the JCD allegedly sheltered 'third world' groups and witnesses said some JCD activists had also counteracted the shots by firing around 20 rounds from the Surji Sen Hall areas.

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## Montu supporters burn Amu's effigy

Several hundred Awami League activists yesterday staged a demonstration in front of the Awami League office protesting the suspension of the party's central leader Mostafa Mohsin Montu, reports BSS.

Demonstrators carrying portraits of Montu chanted slogans accusing Awami League leadership for the suspension and demanded its immediate withdrawal.

They also burnt an effigy of Amir Hossain Amu, Joint Secretary of Bangladesh Awami League.

Earlier, the supporters of Montu in groups assembled in front of the Awami League central office to show their strength.

Awami League Central Working Committee Thursday night suspended Mostafa Mohsin Montu, General Secretary of Dhaka District unit of Awami League and President of Awami Jubo League, for what it said "anti-party activities."

Slogan-shouting demonstrators later paraded different city streets and held a brief rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Presided over by Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Member of executive committee of Dhaka district unit and a former MP, it was addressed among

others, by AKM Saifuddin Ahmed, Organising Secretary, district unit of the party. Speakers at the rally termed the suspension a "planned conspiracy" and alleged that the "intriguers" within the Awami League had done this "undemocratic" act. The speakers lauded the contribution of Montu to Awami League and demanded the withdrawal of suspension order within seven days. Thirty office-bearers and members of the executive committee of Awami League Dhaka district unit, in a joint statement yesterday expressed resentment over the suspension of Montu and issuance of show cause notice on him. They said Shamsuddoha Khan Majlis, President of Awami League Dhaka district unit, at the dictate of some "conspirators" within the party had placed certain "baseless allegations" against Montu before the Awami League Central Committee.

Signatories to the statement include Munshi Abdul Aziz, Vice-President, A K M Saifuddin Ahmed, Organising Secretary, Abdul Jabbar, Office Secretary, Nur Mohammad Sharif, Education and Cultural Secretary, Sheikh Siraj, Social Welfare Secretary and Advocate, Abul Kalam, Treasurer, of Dhaka dist.AL.



## Historic March

A Star Commentary

March 7, 1971 was more than just a day. It marked a watershed in the history of Bangladesh, with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivering a speech which ended with the declaration, 'The struggle this time is for our freedom, the struggle this time is for independence.'

Rarely had a people been shown the likely direction of their history, in so few a word, as those uttered by Mujib to a two million strong audience. And the people, moved by the power and sense of conviction and destiny inherent in the speech, never looked back.

From today, The Daily Star's account of those tumultuous days of March 1971 moves to page 8, beginning with the full text of the Race Course speech.

From tomorrow, the Historic March series will remain in its expanded form on Page 8.

## AL observes historic 7th March today

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League (AL) holds a discussion meeting in observance of historic 7th March at 3 pm today at the central office of the party.

AL Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting.

According to a press release, AL will hoist both the national and party flags at the

See Page 12 Col 8

## Kamal refuses to back out from Democratic Forum

By Nurul Kabir

Despite repeated insistence from the party top brass including Sheikh Hasina, Awami League leader Dr. Kamal Hossain has refused to back out from his role in organising the 'controversial' Bangladesh Democratic Forum.

When his attention was drawn to a UNB story released last night that he had abandoned the forum, he told 'The Daily Star, This is an utter lie.'

At a special Presidium meeting yesterday morning at the AL chief Sheikh Hasina's Minto Road residence, the AL presidium leaders requested Dr Kamal to abandon his idea of the proposed forum in view of the consensus of the just-concluded three-day extended meeting of the party meeting, sources said.

Chaired by Sheikh Hasina, the presidium meeting was attended by Dr Kamal Hossain, Abdus Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan, Zillur Rahman, Salauddin Yusuf and Sajeda Chowdhury.

Dr Kamal argued that as the forum was not a political party so he like any other party member, could associate himself with any socio-cultural or

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# Azeri president bows to pressure, quits

MOSCOW, Mar 6: Azerbaijani President Ayaz Muttalibov submitted his resignation to the parliament of the former Soviet republic during an extraordinary session in Baku today, the Interfax news agency said, reports AFP.

Interfax did not say if Muttalibov's resignation had been accepted.

Muttalibov has been under pressure to resign because of his handling of the situation in the disputed enclave of Nagorny Karabakh.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators massed around the Azerbaijani parliament today demanding Muttalibov's resignation and tougher action against Armenian nationalists in Nagorny Karabakh.

The protesters, supporters of the Nationalist Opposition Popular Front, are angered by the recent gains made by Armenians in the armed conflict in Nagorny Karabakh between Muslim Azeris and the enclave's Christian Armenian majority. The Azerbaijani parliament

called an emergency session Thursday to discuss the crisis.

Meanwhile in Yerevan, according to Armenian military sources, twenty-seven people were killed and dozens wounded as Azerbaijani forces backed by armoured vehicles captured the Armenian village of Kazanchi in Nagorny Karabakh today.

The late of more than 100 other inhabitants of the village near Mardakert, in the north of the embattled enclave, was unknown, the sources said. The village, under attack for

the past two days, was overrun by several hundred Azerbaijani fighters backed by a dozen heavy armoured vehicles and about 20 troop transporters, they added.

The Russian Information Agency in Moscow said earlier that 25 people, 15 Armenians and 10 Azeris, had been killed during an attack on Kazanchi on Thursday, with fighting continuing Friday.

According to another report, Azerbaijani troops backed by tanks and armoured vehicles launched a large-scale of-

ensive against Armenian fighters in Nagorny Karabakh on the same day, members of the assembly in the enclave's capital said.

The offensive began around 1:00 pm (100 GMT) and was launched from the Azerbaijani town of Agdam, on the border with Nagorny Karabakh, said deputies of the assembly in Stepanakert, capital of the Armenian enclave.

Azerbaijani forces were headed towards the Armenian villages of Askeran and Nakhichevanik in the east of

Nagorny Karabakh, which is claimed by both Armenia and Azerbaijan, the deputies said.

At least six heavy tanks, 20 armoured vehicles and more than 1,000 troops were involved in the attack, they said. Armenian fighters were holding their positions but had suffered heavy casualties, the Stepanakert deputies said.

Nagorny Karabakh is located within Muslim Azerbaijan but most of its 1,80,000 residents are Christian Armenians. The four-year conflict has left an estimated 1,500 people dead.

## Ramzan begins today

The holy month of Ramzan begins today (Saturday) with the sighting of the new moon Friday evening in different parts of the country, reports UNB.

Devoted Muslims all over the country will observe fast from dawn to dusk during the holy month and seek mercy and forgiveness of the Almighty Allah.

Ramzan, the holiest month of Islamic calendar, is treated as the month of restraint, abstinence, tolerance and self-control.

Restaurants and other eat- See Page 12 Col 7

## Sehri & Iftar timings

(For Dhaka)

| Ramzan 1 Saturday | 2 Sunday |
|-------------------|----------|
| Sehri             | 4.55 am  |
| Iftar             | 6.11 pm  |