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Dhaka may take Rohingya issue to UN Council

Bangladesh is considering to approach the UN Security Council to take up the Myanmar refugee issue. Foreign Office sources said Saturday.

Necessary instructions have been issued to the country's mission in New York to do the needful in this respect, the sources said.

The problem, described as one of the gravest crisis in history, needs strong and extensive international supports for its early resolution.

Brutal atrocities unleashed by the Myanmar military junta on the Muslims in the Arakan province has triggered a tragic situation posing a threat to the stability of the region and increasing human sufferings.

Tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims in Arakan

have been streamed into Bangladesh to escape political, racial and religious persecution committed by the Burmese military rulers in a blatant violation of the UN charters on human rights.

Reports on destruction of their houses, looting of their belongings and property, killing and raping and even demolition of mosques were pouring in here. A total exodus continued into the country from across the Naaf river bordering the two neighbours.

The Burmese troops, letting loose a reign of terror in the entire Arakan region are abducting young men and women from Muslim families in the region, reports said.

According to official estimates, more than one lakh Burmese Muslims, being

evicted from their homes, have crossed into Bangladesh. Unofficial count, however, has put the figure at more than 1.5 lakh.

Another alarming aspect of the problem is a massive deployment of the Burmese troops along the 176-mile border posing a threat to the territorial integrity of Bangladesh.

There is no scope to take lightly the Burmese troops attack on Rejupara BDR outpost in Bandarban in last December, killing one BDR personnel and looting arms and ammunition from the camp.

Myanmar authorities did not respond positively to Bangladesh's repeated initiative to settle the problem peacefully in a bilateral manner. Foreign Office sources,

however, said Dhaka had kept its door open for dialogue to settle the issue amicably.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali, Human Rights Commission, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Organisation of Islamic Conference and other countries and international agencies have condemned the atrocities carried on by the Burmese authorities, forcing the Rohingya Muslims to flee to Bangladesh.

The European Community — two of its partners are permanent members of the Security Council — has also condemned the torture and persecution on the Rohingya Muslim.

The United States has already raised the issue with the

Only a quarter of refugees sheltered: Anvar

By Staff Correspondent

Only one quarter of the Rohingya refugees in the Cox's Bazar region have proper shelters, the visiting representative of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) said Saturday evening.

Briefing newsmen at the Sheraton Hotel after returning from a visit to the refugee camps, UNHCR Director for the Asia and Oceania region, Jamshid Anvar, added that the rest of the refugees numbering about 110,000 are managing with makeshift shelters made of sticks and straw mats to protect themselves from the sun during the day and the 'quite chilly' nights in the

evening. Referring it as a major refugee problem that the UNHCR has faced in recent times, he said that if the ongoing influx increases as it did during the last 10 to 12 days, at about 5000 per day, then the total number of refugees may exceed 200,000 by the end of March.

Saying that the work done by the government and the local authorities was of 'exceptional quality', he noted, 'In my 20-year-experience in dealing with refugees, I found the devotion and effectiveness displayed to be extraordinary.'

However, he added, 'We are facing a lot of problems including getting the supply of shelter materials and large parcels of land' to set up bigger camps.

He said that currently the refugees have been placed in nine separate camps in groups of 3,000 to 20,000 in each. 'We must put people in larger camps considering the financial and management point of view.'

Noting that a potential site for setting up of a large camp

Press Note

No plan to shift HSC exam date

The government has no plan to shift the date of HSC examination, an Education Ministry press note said yesterday, reports BSS.

Following is text of the press note: 'Attention of the government has been drawn to the news item published in a section of the press concerning assurance of the Education Minister to shift the date of the HSC examination. The news item is motivated, fabricated and a baseless one. In fact, the Education Minister gave no assurance to shift the date of the HSC examination.'

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Storm over economic issues in Parliament tomorrow

Rao to quit 'rather than face defeat'

NEW DELHI, Mar 7: Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao has threatened to resign and hold fresh elections if his party fails to win a crucial parliamentary vote next week, a senior government minister said today.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad told Reuters that Rao will resign ahead of a key policy vote in the Lok Sabha (lower house) if his Congress Party fails to muster a majority.

Rao's nine-month-old minority government must win Monday's vote approving president Ramaswamy Venkataraman's address to parliament last week. This amounts to a

vote of confidence. Azad confirmed newspaper reports that quoted Rao as threatening to quit and hold elections 'rather than face defeat' in the Lok Sabha.

'The reports are not untrue,' Azad said, but added, 'that doesn't necessarily mean we will be defeated in the parliament.'

AFP adds: Rao's ruling Congress (I) Party was mobilising its supporters on a hectic weekend as it prepared to ward off the first major threat to its minority government.

The party leadership issued a whip ordering all its MPs to be present and voting in parliament on Monday to defeat

an opposition bid to pull down the eight-month-old government, Congress (I) sources said.

Rao met cabinet colleagues and legislative allies Friday night to take stock of the situation, summoned out-of-town MPs back to the capital and ordered his ministers to stay put and on alert to ride out the storm, the sources said.

The cabinet was entrusted with the collective responsibility of enduring full Congress (I) attendance Monday when MPs vote on a traditional motion of thanks on a presidential speech to the legislature.

The hectic efforts came

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Democracy not safe in hands of BNP: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition leader in Parliament and Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina on Saturday said yesterday that democracy was now existing in the country only by name as the present government had turned into an autocratic one.

'The parliament has turned into a most ineffective forum because of the autocratic character of BNP government,' she said adding that the government's only aim was 'to cling to power by any means.'

She was addressing a discussion meeting on the occasion of March 7 at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

The meeting was addressed among others by party general secretary Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Mattia Chowdhury, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu and Matiur Rahman. Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting.

The AL chief said that democracy was not safe in the hands of this government.

She criticised the BNP government for its claim that 'democracy would be at stake if BNP did not remain in power.'

'I can assure you that none can harm democracy if this government does not hand over power as the Sattar government did,' the AL chief said and added that 'the present government has already failed in running the country.'

She alleged that the government managed to utilise only 10 per cent of the foreign aid it received so far.

Sheikh Hasina said the people struggled 16 years to eliminate autocracy from the country but democracy and economic emancipation were still a far cry.

The spirit of independence is now neglected and the history of the War of Indepen-

dence is being distorted, she alleged.

The opposition leader pointed out that the War of Independence was basically started from March 7 after historic speech by Bangabandhu at Race Course Maidan and his message for declaration of independence was read out by Mr Hanjan from Kalurghat Radio Station on March 26.

She demanded that the historic March 7 speech should be broadcast over through radio and television.

A UNB story says: Hasina recalled that during a visit to the port city she incidentally came to know from Hanjan as

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Montu loyalists' activities annoy AL

By Nurul Kabir

The Awami League high-command appears to be annoyed with Montu for the developments that followed his suspension from party membership.

The membership of Mostafa Mohsin Montu, Chairman of the youth wing of AL and General Secretary of Dhaka District unit of the party was suspended Thursday for his alleged involvement in the killing of Badal.

Badal, a central leader of Chhatra League, student wing of AL, was killed on January 9.

The AL Central Working Committee also took a decision to serve a show cause notice asking why his membership would not be cancelled.

Following the Working Committee decision, the supporters of Montu turned violent. They burnt the effigy of

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Australia, India sustain hopes

BRISBANE, Mar 7: Defending champions Australia and India both scored crucial victories Saturday to keep alive their hopes of advancing to the semifinals of the World Cup cricket tournament, reports AP.

After restricting Sri Lanka

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Int'l Women's Day today

By Staff Correspondent

The International Women's Day will be observed today (Sunday) throughout the country and in the entire world as well for the emancipation of women from all sorts of exploitation and repression.

This year's observance is focused on the theme 'Women, environment and development, symbiosis for survival.'

International Women's Day is being observed in accordance with a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1977. The resolution invited member countries to proclaim in accordance with their historical and national traditions and customs, any day in the year as the United Nations day for

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Humayun Rashid Chowdhury's passport seized

Star Report

The Government has seized the passports of former foreign minister Humayun Rashid Chowdhury and his wife Mahjabeen Chowdhury.

Chowdhury was planning to leave the country for a by-pass surgery abroad.

When contacted, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Home Minister, confirmed the incident and said that the passports 'have been seized in the interest of an inquiry.'

Earlier, the diplomatic passport, once held by Chowdhury, was detected by Japanese police in the possession of a Bangladeshi living there. The Japanese authorities referred the case to authorities in Dhaka which necessitated investigation into the case, the Home Minister added.

BDR firing kills 3 in Jessore

Three people were killed in a firing by BDR in an incident that took place at village Tunlaghera, near Begatali Bazar under Monirampur thana in Jessore during the night following Friday, March 6, reports BSS.

The government has directed Deputy Commissioner, Jessore to enquire into the incident.

The BDR Sector Commander of Khulna and ADM, Jessore visited the place of occurrence.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Rohingya refugees now 1.25 lakh

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 7: The number of Rohingya Muslim refugees has jumped to 1.25 lakh following fresh arrival of 60,000 during the past three days, official sources said. The unofficial figure of the Rohingyas is about 1.75 lakh, reports BSS.

Rickshaw strike in Kushtia

KUSHTIA, Mar 7: Rickshaw-pullers of the town kept their rickshaws off the road during a day-long strike today (Saturday), protesting the killing of a colleague in a truck accident. Amrinal (30), a rickshaw-puller, died in the accident in front of Rupali Bank on N S Road of the town. The grief-stricken rickshaw-pullers brought out a procession which paraded the main streets, carrying the body of Amrinal, reports UNB.

Satyajit's condition yet to stabilise

CALCUTTA, Mar 7: Ailing film maestro, Satyajit Ray's condition is yet to stabilise though there has been a 'marginal improvement,' a medical bulletin issued said here tonight, reports PTI.

Sabri and Ifar timings

Ramzan	March	Shehri	Ular
2	8	4-55 am	6-11 pm
3	9	4-54 am	6-12 pm

Commentary

A second TV channel: Huda should do some rethinking

By S M Ali

The Minister for Information, Barrister Nazmul Huda may be right in thinking of a second television channel for Bangladesh, but he is wrong in planning to set it up in partnership with a foreign network.

During a recent press interview, the Minister offered a few details of the proposed move. He mentioned the proportion of the share of equity —

40 per cent to be exact — of the potential foreign partner, hinted about the timing of the start of the second channel and referred to the preparation of the contract. But, in the end, he left a few questions, including one about the management structure of the new venture, unanswered.

What would worry media circles here is that some kind of commitment seems to have

already been made to the party concerned.

While we are all for opening up our communication channel to the outside world, in a two-way flow of information, I, for one, have a serious reservation about foreign participation, either in management or finance, in any part of our national media, newspapers and the electronic network in-

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Malaria eradication is unrealistic goal, experts say

NEW DELHI, Mar 7: Insecticide-resistant mosquitoes and 'smart' germs are foiling efforts to eradicate malaria in developing countries, reports IPS.

Experts say there is no 'magic bullet' cure for the debilitating mosquito-transmitted fever that has become the Third World's most serious public health problem.

Every year over 1000 million people contract malaria, and over a million die annually of it, says the World Health

Organisation (WHO). About 90 per cent of malaria cases and 80 per cent of the deaths occur south of the Sahara in Africa.

Eradication is an unrealistic goal and malaria control programmes — a mix of anti-malarial drugs and personal protection measures — can only aim to keep it from spreading, according to experts at an international meet here early this month.

Malaria is transmitted by the female mosquito. Experts

have identified some 70 species which carry the parasite.

But all attempts to kill the malaria-carrying mosquitoes have been unsuccessful as it is a hardy survivor and quickly develops immunity against insecticides.

In several Asian countries, the resurgence of malaria in the mid-1970's was directly due to increased mosquito resistance to DDT, the most commonly used pesticide, experts say.

Mosquitoes multiply very easily. Rain water in discarded containers and even water that has collected in the hoof prints of cattle are sufficient for mosquitoes to spawn.

Unlike small pox which was eradicated with the development of an effective vaccine, malaria control was marked by initial success, particularly in South and South-East Asia. But subsequent attempts to control the disease have resulted in failure.

'Malaria is more compli-

cated because the potential for transmission and the effectiveness of control measures varies with the different characteristics of the plasmodium (parasite), climate and physical environment, and the habits of people vary from place to place,' says Peter I Trigg of WHO.

Experts say that the parasite has a remarkable capacity for adapting to drugs. In several regions in South-East Asia, more than half the cases of falciparum malaria (cerebral

malaria), which can be fatal, can no longer be cured with Mefloquine, which has only been in use since 1984.

Since the discovery of quinine in 1820, researchers have been on the trial of a foolproof drug to kill the malaria parasite.

Mefloquine and Halofantrine are some of the more recent ones that indicated promising results.

Recently, medical researchers have been excited by

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