

Myanmar Muslims also fleeing into Thailand

BANGKOK, Mar 29: Myanmar refugees, including some Muslims, are continuing to flee into Thailand to escape a Myanmar troop offensive against Karen rebel strongholds along the border, a private aid official said today, reports AFP.

The official, known as Pastor Robert, said the refugees entering Thailand in recent days included a few hundred Muslims who live in Karen areas along the border and fled with the members of the ethnic minority.

Asked if they were fleeing because of reported persecution by government troops in their homeland, Robert replied, 'this is difficult to verify. Like the Karens, they fear reprisals from the Army.'

He said there had long been Muslim communities of up to a few hundred people in each of the Myanmar refugee camps in Thailand.

The military government in Yangon has vowed to wipe out the Karen guerrilla strongholds before the dry season ends in May. The junta recently said it was committing additional troops to the offensive.

Most Myanmar Muslims live in the west of the country. Nearly 200,000 Rohingya Muslims from western Arakan province have fled into Bangladesh in recent months, alleging widespread atrocities by the soldiers.

Another report says, Thai and Myanmar border task force commanders are to hold talks over Yangon's shelling of a Thai border village in the weekend, a senior Thai official said today.

Hundreds of Thai villagers fled their homes around midnight Friday after Myanmar soldiers shelled their village in retaliation against bomb attacks on Myanmar border town of Myawadi, allegedly carried out by insurgents from the Thai side of the border, which killed one Myanmar woman.

Yangon has accused guerrillas of the Karen National Union (KNU) of shelling Myawadi from the Thai side of the border.

Myanmar soldiers retaliated by lobbing four 60mm mortar shells near Ta Trong Rim Moel, a border market on the east bank of the Moel River, said Colonel Niphan Sripaiboon, commander of the Thai border task force.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia with Ansar and VDP officials and members at an Iftar party at Ansar and VDP Headquarters Sunday. — PID photo

Public trial organisers

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Earlier, the trial committee members and organisers gathered in the room of the Bar Association President and consulted with the lawyers.

Several hundred supporters of the Committee also thronged the court premises.

"It is a sad repetition of history," Jahanara Imam told reporters in the court while commenting on the warrants adding "We will reach our goal overcoming all obstacles."

Nearly 50 lawyers including Barrister Syed Istiaq Ahmed, S S Halder, Ahmed Ali, Saifuddin Ahmed and Zakirul Islam were present when the petition was moved.

In another development, Jahanara Imam, Chairman of Gano Adalat, which tried Jamaat leader Golam Azam on March 26, Sunday termed the issuance of warrants of arrest as condemnable.

Talking to UNB at the office of the president of Supreme Court Bar Association, where all the 24 persons against whom warrants of arrest had been issued gathered there, said government would create obstacle, but "I firmly believe that people will win. ... we have to win."

She said this move of arrest was nothing more than the repetition of history. People were seen building up movement to realise their just demand through ages but government resorted to repression and oppression but people's victory comes at last.

"I do not have any doubt about our victory ... as we are also fighting for a just cause", Jahanara Imam, also mother of martyr Rumi, said with firm conviction.

Dr Ahmed Sharif said government has got no right to issue warrants of arrest against people involved in such a democratic move.

He said Gano-Adalat was merely a protest rally of the people where people took part to express their opinion.

"The people's court is a new modern and democratic system to uphold the demands", Dr Sharif said.

People have every right to express their condemnation, resentment and outrage against the misuse of government and through the Gano-Adalat people have just conveyed that, he said.

Dr Anisuzzaman said the allegations brought by the government against us were unexpected and painful.

All the 24 persons against whom warrants of arrest have been issued have some contribution in the birth of this country and such people can not declare war against state. The allegation is unfair and inconsistent.

Cultural activist Aly Zaker said "our role was absolutely constitutional. The cultural workers of the country are law abiding citizen and they have always spoken on the rights of the people. They have been vocal against all unlawful and unconstitutional practices."

In this context he said the government of today got all support from this faction of the society during their struggle against autocracy.

He termed the allegation as uncalled for an unfortunate.

The warrants of arrest were issued against Jahanara Imam, chairman, and 11 members of Gano-Adalat. The members are, Advocate Gazul Huq, Dr. Ahmed Sharif, Mazharul Islam, Barrister Shaifq Ahmed, Faiz Ahmed, Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Kalim Sharafi, Maulana Abdul Awal, Lt Col (ret'd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Lt Col (ret'd) Abu Osman Chowdhury and Barrister Shawkat Ali.

Warrants were also issued against three prosecuting lawyers Advocate Z. I. Khan Panna, Advocate Shamsuddin Babul, Advocate Umme Kulsum Rekha and defence lawyer Advocate Nazrul Islam, three plaintiffs Dr Anisuzzaman, Dr Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir and Syed Shamsul Huq, four witnesses Shahriyar Kabir, Yahya Mahmud, Aly Zaker and Dr. Mustaq Hussain, and Member Secretary of the Organising Committee Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury.

Ex MP accused of shoplifting

By Staff Correspondent

A former woman MP and her husband were brought to the Motijheel police station last night for shop-lifting at Baitul Mokarram Jewellery shop.

The shopowners and employees nabbed the lady Sultana-ud-Dawla and her husband Suja-ud-Dawla accused of lifting seven gold-bangles from Amin Jewellers and Happy Jewellers.

The leaders of Bangladesh Jewellers Association lodged a case against them for shop lifting while the husband of the lady filed another case with Motijheel police for harassing them in the market.

All the plaintiffs were in the police station till 1 am but police did not arrest any of them.

Students clash with transport workers

By Staff Correspondent

A group of unruly students of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute Sunday morning clashed with the bus workers at Tejaon 'sat rasta' over an issue of bus-fare leaving several persons injured and transport communication suspended for three hours.

The agitated students blocked the road adjacent to the institute at about 10 am and damaged at least six vehicles until they were forced to take off the barricade at about 1 pm.

The clash ensued when several students of the institute picked-up a brawl with a conductor of a minibus over the issue of bus-fare. The students were travelling to Dhaka from Gazipur on the minibus, witnesses said.

Soon after the incident, many students rushed to the spot and started damaging vehicles plying on the road and beating up bus workers. In retaliation the transport workers also chased the students.

Tejaon police rushed to the spot and forced the demonstrators to take off the blockade at about 1 pm.

Police said, the leaders of bus-owners association filed a case with Tejaon police station, but no one was arrested in this connection.

2 injured as JCD factions clash in Pabna

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Mar 29: Two activists of pro-BNP Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal were seriously injured Sunday when a crude bomb went off in Pabna town.

Witnesses said Shahin (22), son of Haji Jalaluddin and Shiblee (23) were seriously injured in the blast.

The injured were rushed to the Pabna sadar hospital.

According to sources, they were injured while making bomb at home.

PM, Inu, Manik

From Page 1 Col 8

of old friends of the streets," he said.

Being pressed, Inu said the Prime Minister wished to meet them to exchange opinion on the present political development. He declined to be specific about the agenda but indicated that Golam Azam issue came up during the discussion.

The JSD leader observed that any national issue should be resolved through discussion at the national level for greater interest of democracy. He described the Golam Azam issue "a very vital question" before the nation.

PDF leader Saifuddin Ahmed Manik told UNB that the Prime Minister invited them to exchange opinion on the overall political and economic situation prevailing in the country.

He said Golam Azam issue figured prominently during the discussion.

Manik said they have urged the Prime Minister to take initiative for resolving the vital political and economic problems facing the nation.

Jamaat demands release of Golam Azam

From Our Correspondent

GAZIPUR, Mar 29: At least 20 people were injured when a minibus rammed into the sidewalk of the 'Coddia Bridge' and fell on its side at Kaliakoyer in Gazipur district Sunday afternoon.

The Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) in a different statement yesterday also resented the terroristic activities on the campus Sunday and demanded punishment of the persons involved.

The DUTA also urged the concerned authorities to take necessary measures immediately to ensure peaceful academic atmosphere on the DU campus by arresting all the terrorists irrespective of their political affiliation.

BSS adds: The provost committee, Teachers association and University administration were quoted as saying that all these killers were the identified armed hooligans or the BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

The BCL leaders demanded the immediate release of Tokon and the three others during the press conference.

They also condemned the behaviour of the police during the raid.

In another development the provost committee of the Dhaka University condemned the attack on the teachers' residence by the armed terrorists Sunday and urged the concerned authorities to restore congenial atmosphere on the campus.

The provost committee at an emergency meeting presided over by Professor Abdul Kalam yesterday also urged the law enforcing agencies to ensure their security.

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The Midnight File

Saudis leaked Patriot secrets to China?

LONDON, Mar 29: Israel has told US investigators that it was Saudi Arabia, not the Jewish state, that transferred US missile technology to China, the Sunday Telegraph reported Sunday. Israel radio reported Saturday that US investigators in Israel apparently did not find any evidence that Israel had sold Patriot missile technology to China, reports AP.

10 get life term for Soviet plane hijack

KARACHI, Mar 29: A special anti-terrorist court on Sunday sentenced 10 escaped Siberian labour camp prisoners to life imprisonment for the August 1990 hijacking of a Soviet airliner, reports AP.

8 killed as Azeris shell Stepanakert

MOSCOW, Mar 29: Eight people were killed and 90 wounded today when Azerbaijani artillery shells slammed into the main government building in Stepanakert, the main town of the enclave of Nagorny-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, the Itar-Tass agency reported, reports AFP.

Levy decides to quit

JERUSALEM, Mar 29: Foreign Minister David Levy said today he was resigning from the Israeli government, revealing a deep rift in the ruling Likud Party just three months before a June 23 national election, reports Reuters.

Govt, 'trial' body

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"But we want a permanent solution to the problem and deportation alone is not the answer," the source, who is also a lawyer, told The Daily Star.

The Committee was insisting on starting legal proceedings against him under International Crimes Act (tribunal) 1973 which is protected by the Constitution, the source said.

This international law provides for detention, prosecution and punishment of persons accused of committing genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other similar offences.

Golam Azam, 70, stripped of his citizenship after independence, returned to Bangladesh with a Pakistani passport in 1978 and involved himself in Jamaat politics.

The agitation against Golam Azam got momentum following his election as the party's chief (Ameer) and the Government finally arrested him under Foreigners Act on March 24. He was given a one-month detention.

The Gana Adalat (people's court), which announced a public trial programme in January, tried him on Thursday defying Government's warning and the authorities issued warrants of arrest against 24 organisers, judges and witnesses.

UP polls results gazetted

Election results of 2,568 Union Parishads have been published in the gazette and sent to concerned authorities, reports UNB.

11 parties

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the attackers.

Those who attended the meeting included among others Mohiuddin Ahmed, Abdur Razzak, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofael Ahmed, Mohammod Nasim, Mirza Sultan Raja, KM Jahangir, Monam Sarfar and Dr Harunur Rashid of the Awami League, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Nurul Islam Nahid, Pankaj Bhattacharye and Alhaj Abdus Samad of the four-party Patriotic Democratic Front and Rashed Khan Menon, Nirmol Sen, Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan, AFM Mahbul Haq, Noyceem Jahangir, Sharif Nurul Ambia of the Five-Party Alliance and Suranjit Sen Gupta and Mohammad Afzal of the Ganatantri Party.

Commentary

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than two or three cabinet ministers — was to assume that the Opposition AL, and Sheikh Hasina in particular, would turn the anti-Jamaat movement into one against the BNP administration. This may not yet be the intention of the AL Chief.

Perhaps the worst error of judgement committed by the administration — in this case the Ministry of Home Affairs — has been to try to deal with the supposed threat posed by the organisers of the anti-Azam trial as a law and order problem, in narrow legal terms. If there is indeed a threat, it is a political one, which deserves to be treated as such, through dialogue and consultations and, as we had suggested on Saturday, through a face-to-face meeting between Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina.

Since the 24 distinguished persons involved in the "public trial" have not yet been taken into custody (at the time of writing), there is a breathing time which should be fully utilised by responsible elements in BNP, AL, Five-Party Alliance and Imam Committee to thwart the challenge to the country's stability and progress.

JKLf march

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saying they would come out of hiding to lead Monday's march across the cease-fire line.

Threatening to compound the trouble was the Jamaat-e-Islami, a small but well organized religious party that finances the guerrillas who want Indian-Kashmir to become part of Pakistan instead of the independent nation the Liberation Front wants.

"Pakistani flags will be hoisted on homes and business throughout Muzaffarabad to demonstrate that the people of Kashmir want to join with Pakistan," said Jamaat leader Qasi Hussein Ahmed.

Half day hartal observed in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 29: A dawn-to-noon strike was observed in the town today at the call of shopkeepers protesting attack by miscreants on a garment shop, reports UNB.

No vehicles plied and offices and business establishments were closed during the hartal. Few rickshaws, however, moved.

Police today arrested Arshad Ali (24) in connection with Saturday's incident from Daa Dhargara in the town.

A group of hoodlums ransacked the shop, "Himal Fashion", in the town Saturday as its proprietor refused to pay Tk 10,000 in toll.

Eliason's visit

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increasing number of refugees."

The Foreign Minister replied in the negative when asked if the issue would be raised at the UN Security Council. He said, "Bangladesh is still committed to solve it bilaterally through negotiation as it was in the past." The minister described the presence of large number of refugees as an "economic burden on Bangladesh".

Report from Cox's Bazar says: More than 1.87 lakh Rohingya refugees had so far been registered at 12 refugee camps in Ramu, Ukha, Teknaf and Natkongchari, according to official sources.

The 12th refugee camps was opened a few days back at Chundum under Natkongchari upazila to accommodate fresh arrivals of refugees. Over 97 thousand refugees have so far been given shelter in camps while the rest are still spread over Teknaf, Ukha and Ramu areas. Unofficial estimate of refugees stands over two lakh.

Official sources said 158 refugees had so far died of various diseases.

The government had sanctioned Taka 1.43 crore, 400 metric tons of rice, 250 metric tons of wheat and other materials for the refugees.

Meanwhile the Myanmar government is learnt to have adopted a 'go slow' tactics in uprooting Rohingya Muslims from Arakan and pushing them to Bangladesh on the eve of UN Under-Secretary General Jan Eliasson's visit.

According to reports received from Rohingya refugees, the Myanmar government is learnt to have virtually stopped persecution of Rohingyas in order to give the Under-Secretary General an impression that Rohingyas Muslims were not persecuted and pushed into Bangladesh.

According to official sources here 2,080 Rohingyas Muslims crossed into Bangladesh through different border points during the past five days while there was influx of 5 to ten thousand Rohingyas daily before that time. Some refugees at Dechua Palong and Marichha Palong said that the Myanmar government had adopted soft attitude towards Arakan Muslims for the time being. They apprehended that after the visit of the UN Under-Secretary General the Myanmar government would again intensify persecution of the Rohingyas Muslims.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has given another list of 11,080 Myanmar Muslim refugees to Myanmar for necessary action towards repatriation of these people.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs handed over the list to the Embassy of Union of Myanmar here, a Foreign Office spokesman said today.

With this seventh list, identity of 39,007 Myanmar Muslim refugees has so far been handed over to Myanmar authorities.

Additional lists of refugees will be handed over to Myanmar authorities soon, the spokesman said.

The process of handing over the lists began after Yangon had agreed to examine the list of the Myanmar Muslims who crossed into Bangladesh.

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Attacks condemned

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They called upon the political parties and organisation not to involve the newspapers with any political incident.

The leaders said tolerance was the precondition of democracy and there should be no interference in the newspapers' right to freedom of expression. "We also want that intolerance and malice in politics should be stopped forthwith."

The newspaper industry leaders observed with great concern that a section of political parties and organisations were giving provocative statements. These are carried by newspapers as there is freedom of expression, they pointed out and said, tendency to attack newspaper offices on that consideration is regrettable.

They said newspapers are not party to any political clashes. It is not healthy politics to make newspapers victims of political wrath and attack newspaper employees. It is desirable that a change is brought about in this tendency, they said.

They said that it was not desirable also that newspapers became political weapons.

The newspaper industry leaders said it was not possible to continue publication of newspapers having been held hostage in the hands of terrorists.

They said the government had to take effective steps in maintaining normal law and order in the country as it was the responsibility of the government to ensure security to public life and properties.

"We cannot accept that the government will fail in discharging its responsibility in this respect and we will continue to be subjected to assault without making any hue and cry," they said.

The leaders expressed their firm pledge to preserve the hard earned freedom of the press.

Earlier the meeting of the newspaper industry leaders with Sanaulah Noori in the chair formed a 12-member committee to resist attack on newspaper offices and protect the freedom of the press.

The 12-member committee includes Barrister Moinul Hossain, President BSP — Convenor, Joint Convenor — Sanaulah Noori, President, Editors Council and Reazuddin Ahmed, President BFUJ, members — BSP Secretary General Anwarul Islam, Editors Council General Secretary AQM Jainal Abedin, BFUJ Secretary General Amanullah Kabir, DUJ President Shahjahan Miah, DUJ General Secretary Altaf Mahmud, President and the Secretary General of Sangbadptra Press Sramik Federation Mosharraf Hossain and Bazirul Rahman Milon and Sangbadptra Karmachari Federation President and General Secretary Mozammel Hoq.

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Police searching the Zahurul Haq Hall compound of the Dhaka University for arms yesterday. — Star photo

Police raid DU hall

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University Club and fired shots in that area, sources added.

Later, at about 11 am, the BCL (S-A) workers brought out a procession from Zahurul Huq Hall to protest the arrest and held a rally in front of the National Press Club.

Addressing the rally BCL (S-A) leaders Kamruzzaman Ansari, Mamtazuddin Mehdi and B M Mozammel demanded the immediate release of Tokon and the others.

The BCL leaders termed the case against Tokon 'false' and 'conspiratorial'.

Campus sources said that police raided the Zahurul Huq Hall again at about 11.15 am.

Hall sources said that some 15 students were injured and the hands of two persons were fractured as police resorted to baton charge during the raid.

The injured were taken to private clinics.

Meanwhile, the Zahurul Huq Hall Students' Union arranged a press conference yesterday evening following these incidents.

The press conference was attended among others by Ferdous Zaman Tuhi, Zahurul Huq and Shahidul Islam while the Acting General Secretary of the hall union, Mizanur Rahman Arju, read out the written statement.

The press conference observed that although the killers of student leaders Badal, Chunnu and Mizan were moving around freely in front

20 injured in road mishap

From Our Correspondent

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Heat wave likely to continue for 3 more days

The moderate heat wave sweeping across the country is likely to continue for another three days, Met office predicted Sunday, reports UNB.

It said that the heat wave, which started three days back, is likely to sweep all over the country for another two to three days.