US refugee body hails

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support" the decision of those who choose to repatriate voluntarily and in 'full knowledge" of the conditions to which they are repatriating.

Lauding the government decision to allow UN officials to interview the returning refugees, USCR said: "By so doing, you have ensured the voluntary nature of this particular repatriation and lived upto your stated commitment not to force back refugees against their will"

Urging the government to maintain this policy 'which is not only right, but also in the best interest of all concerned the letter said the USCR would continue to monitor future repatriations and to *press the government of Burma (Myanmar) to allow international monitoring in Arakan

In the letter signed by Hiram A Ruiz, a policy analyst of the organisation, USCR also thanked the Foreign Minister, for addressing participants in the Washington Burma roundtable" at its office, during his recent US visit.

Repatriation remained suspended since December 5 after UNHCR withdrew from taking part in the repatriation process following "misunderstanding" with the government

Later, both UNHCR and the US State Department charged the government of "coercing" the refugees to return home. On December 24, the

UNHCR Chief Sadako Ogata, in All Waqt estates to be registered

The State Minister for Religious Affairs Professor M A Mannan, yesterday said all the Waqf estates in the country would be brought under registration, reports BSS.

The Waqf administration he said earned a record revenue of Taka 62 lakh during the fiscal 1991-92 collected only from the registered Wafq es tates throughout the country.

In fiscal 1990-91, the rev enue earning was Taka 44 lakh, he added Addressing a grand Waq!

conference here the State Minister said that this collection was made from 15 thousand registered Waqf estates.

He referred to about one lakh 30 thousand unregistered Waqf estates and said, efforts were being made to bring all of them under registration to rationalise the Wagf administration and at the same time make it income generating.

No NGO engaged in subversive activities

LGRD Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder told parliament vesterday the government investigation did not find any NGO engaged in activities subversive to the state or society, reports UNB.

He also refuted the allega tion that some foreign NGOs are engaged in religious conversion.

Replying to a question from Maulana Ataur Rahman Khan, Talukder said there are at present 676 registered NGOs in the country. The government has con-

trol over the NGOs and they are liable to action if found engaged in any illegal activity, the minister said.

Replying to another question from Abu Bakr of Natore the LGRD minister said the government is investigating alleged irregularities in co-operative societies across the country. He hinted that defaulting societies may face ban.

12 jailed under Anti-terrorism Act in a week

A total of twelve persons were sentenced to different jail terms this week under the Anti-terrorism Act, police said, reports BSS.

Four persons were awarded six year rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Taka 500 for hijacking in Dhanmondi area and another received five year rigorous imprisonment and had to pay a fine of Taka 500 for toll collection and terrorism in Lalbagh thana under the Dhaka metropolitan area.

Two persons awarded five year imprisonment for toll collection under Boalia thana of

One person in Shibalaya under Manikganj for road blockade, one person in Narayanganj, one under Kotwali thana of Faridpur of teasing and beating girls, one in Mymensingh and one in Rangpur for toll collections were awarded different jail terms under the Anti-terrorism Act.

a letter to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, appealed for taking all steps to halt the "cocreed return" of the Rohingya refugees.

She also issued a veiled threat that her organisation would pull out of the refugee management process if the repatriation policy was not re-

The US State Department also went on to "deplore the use of coercion" in repatriating the Rohingya refugees.

The Washington-based USCR, a programme of the powerful American council for nationalities service, also issued similar statements at that time slating the government's repatriation policy.

However, terming the UNHCR and the US State Department statements as "unfair and uncalled for" Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman denied the charges that the Rohingya refugees were being forced to return

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman last month visited the United States to "remove the misunderstandings" with UNHCR and the US government.

In a statement to the Jatiya Sangsad Wednesday, the Foreign Minister said that Bangladesh officials had held a meeting with the field workers of UNHCR on January 26 and the UN officials began inter viewing the refugees from January 29 following which the repatriation process was

Future Japanese investments in EPZs discussed

Japan and Bangladesh at a consultative talks on industrial cooperation here yesterday discussed the future Japanese investment in Dhaka and Chittagong export processing zones, reports UNB.

Representatives of the Japanese embassy in Bangladesh, Association of Japanese Enterprises at Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ), Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bank of Tokyo and Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) attended the meeting.

Matters relating to the operation and management of the enterprises within the EPZ also came up for discussion during the talks which also reviewed the recent steps of the BEPZA Board of Governors to attract foreign investment in the country.

The Japanese side expressed satisfaction at the government measures to further enhance facilities for the foreign investors.

They appreciated the efforts of the present government and the personal interest taken by the Prime Minister for rapid industrialisation and creating a better environment for foreign investment.

The Japanese team, however, expressed concern at the frequent hartals in Chittagong.

The 12-member Japanese team was led by Yasuyoshi Ichihashi, a Minister at the Japanese Embassy here.

BEPZA was represented by its Executive Chairman Sved Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Fahd, Sharif ask Afghan factions to lay down arms

DUBAI, Feb 4: Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday called on warring sides in Alghanistan to lay down their arms, reports Reuter.

"We implore fighters from the different groups to be worthy of the call of Islam. We urge you to lay down your weapons and spare innocent blood, they said in a statement carried by the official Saudi press agency.

The statement followed talks in Riyadh between King Fahd and Sharif, who visited the Saudi capital for a few

They expressed their sorrow at the continued fighting in Afghanistan between rival Mujahideen groups despite continued efforts to halt the

killing and begin negotiations. On Wednesday 14 people died as guerillas pounded the Afghan capital Kabul with rockets for the 16th succes-

Last month King Fahd invited warring Afghan groups to meet in Saudi Arabia for talks on ways to settle their differ-

The Saudi monarch, custodian of Islam's holiest shrines, is one of the world's most influential Muslim leaders.

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A road block put up by protesters in Mirpur yesterday.

- Star photo

AL stages walkout

From Page 1 Col 4 Commission. The Election Commission had earned the reputation at home and abroad by means of upholding unprecedented neutrality in holding a series of national level and local level elections including the parliamentary polls in 1990.

Besides, the parties prea ching Westminister type of democracy at different forums of the country should be aware of the things that the parlia ment floor had nothing to do with settling election dispute, the BNP leader added

Commenting on the way the House entered into the hours long discussion, completely deviating from the Rules of Procedures of Parliament, the Minister said, that the last night's deliberation would remain as an example of bad test of parliamentarians' in the world history of parliamentary democracy Our deliberation on any is-

sue should be based on facts, should be respectful to each other while we address the House, the Treasury bencher said adding 'parliament floor should not be treated as Palton

with the present situation continuing, I do not feel tempted to be a parliament member next time, Hoque regretted.

Refuting the opposition claim that the government manipulated the election results by interfering the election process conducted by the Election Commission, Hoque said that if it had such ill intention, the ruling party would not have accepted election results of many polls at different tyres of the local governments as well as parliamentary byelections where the ruling party candidates got defeated by thin margin.

He also said that it was un fortunate for them that the MPs belonging to the Jatiya Party that imposed a nine-year long autocratic regime on the people were now advising a democratically elected government to follow democratic

From the opposition, nine other members, including Moudud Ahmed of Jattya Party, Tofael Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, ASM Firoze, Moha mmad Jahangir, Suranjit Sengupta of Ganatantri Party and Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party, took part in the debate that continued for near-

ly three hours. From the Treasury benches, three Ministers - Rafiqul Islam Mia, Najmul Huda and Abdul Matin Chowdhury - and two members - Ziaur Rahman Khan and Qamrul Islam — par-

ticipated in the debate. Deputy leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad made a scathing attack on the ruling party for what he said interfering with the affairs of the Election Commission and thereby undermining its cred-

Election Commission vir tually ceased to function properly at one stage because of the repeated interference of the government machinery, he claimed.

Strongly criticising the presence of controversial Police Commissioner Ragibul Huda during counting in the Election Control Room, the AL leader said, "situation dramatically changed with Huda's entry, he obstructed functioning of the Election Commission."

The angry deputy opposition leader observed that the Mirpur by-election results marked the burial of democ-

Taking part in the discussion, Ganatantri Party leader Suranjit Sengupta alleged the government abused its executive authority to manipulate yesterday's by-election. He was particularly critical of the role played by the Home Minister and the Information Minister.

Unofficial results were fed to media by sidetracking the Election Commission with malafied intention, Suranjit

Earlier, after the Maghreb

break, a large number of Al. members sought the floor. But the Speaker gave the floor to Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim. saying that he had promised on Wednesday to allow him to speak after the election results

Noting the discrepancy in the result figures released on Wednesday and the "pre-emptive" announcements, over radio and television, he charged that the ruling BNP was "in a conspiracy to destroy democ-

He also alleged that Kamal Siddiqui, the Prime Minister's private secretary was also at the Control Room and that Raigibul Huda held a "secret" meeting with the assistant returning officer. Claiming that the AL candidate won by 1800 votes, he said "but the way it was turned over is not a victory for the government rather the last straw for the downfall of democracy".

State Minister for Commu nications Fazlur Rahman charged that the opposition was "insinuating" against the Election Commission, which, he said, earned an impartial and independent image.

He noted that the ruling party accepted the results of Gouripur, Bhola and Rajbari bypolls in defeat and was "disheartened" at the opposition AL for not accepting the defeat in "Only if you win then it is an

impartial poll and if you lose there came the charges of rigging and the like. He said that it was not uncommon to declare the election results as they came on

radio and television and there was nothing wrong in doing Maudud Ahmed of the Jatiya Party told the House that they were ready to accept defeat in

the Mirpur election. But the defeat to whom - to the AL or to the BNP - it is to be decided', Maudud told the chair. The JP leader observed that the election was not a fair and

The Home Minister, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, said in categorical terms that the Awami league supporters turned certain areas of Mirpur into a "battle field" soon after the results were announced following day-long peaceful, free and

fair polls yesterday. The Control Room of the Mirpur by-elections was attacked and ransacked by thousands of Awami League supporters led by Kader Siddiky, ASM Feroz, MP, and Abul Hossain, MP, the Home Minister told the Jatiya Sangsad.

Giving an account of yesterday's lawlessness in Mirpur, Chowdhury told the House that when the results of 117 polling centres arrived at the control office, the Awami League activists attacked the office, resorted to brush firing on the victory procession led by the Mayor of Dhaka City,

Mirza Abbas and created a totally anarchic situation in and around the Election Control

The Works Minister Rafigul Islam Miah, refuting the AL leader Tofael Ahmed's position that his party had no allegation against the Election Commission, said that Tofael's version was self-contradictory.

Tofael Ahmed (AL) claimed that his party candidate won the by-election by 1752 votes. But the government has undone the victory by manipulating results dished out through

He said result sheets of 14 polling centres were not given to the Awami League agents. He questioned the government intention of giving advance the results through UNB ignoring the Election Commission, the presence in the Election Control Room of Prime Minister's secretary Kamal Siddiqui, Police Commissioner Raqibul Huda and sudden stoppage of election results after announcing figures of 78 centres.

The Awami League leader said they were not questioning the integrity of the Election Commission and admitted that polling was absolutely free and

But the results were manipulated from Sugandha (Prime Minister's office). Tofael said and expressed apprehension that no election under BNP government can be held free

Ziaur Rahman Khan MP and Major (Retd) Kamrul MP of the BNP told the House that no election agent of the AL candidate present at the Election Control Room at Mirpur Wednesday evening raised any objection against any procedure relating to the tabulation of votes

Ziaur Rahman and Kamrul were present at the Control Room. The MPs, said that the AL agents, however, objected to broadcast of the unofficial results. At this objection the officials of the Election Commission readily requested the AL agents to appeal in black and white, the MPs added.

The House was adjourned at 9:40 pm till 4 pm February 9.

Protesters in Jessore demand fresh poura polls

From Our Correspondent JESSORE, Feb 4: W large gathering of opposition activists practically laid siege to the main road of the town here blocking the entire Daratana Square from 11 am to 12 noon

The meeting was held at Daratana Square today in response to an earlier call by Awami League, Jatiya Party and Five-party Alliance demanding re-election in Jessore Pourashava. Movement of all type of ve-

hicles remained suspended during the time. Business activities of the town also came to a halt during the programme of the opposition political parties. A joint rally of the AL, JP,

and Five-party Allaince was held later at 12 noon at the Daratana Square, which threatened to go for a greater movement if the government did not agree to hold re-election in the pourashava.

Benazir gives birth to baby girl

ISLAMABAD, Feb 4: After denying for months that she was pregnant, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto gave birth by Caesarean section to a baby girl, according to news reports Thursday, says AP.

Ms. Bhutto's third child was born one-month premature on Wednesday at hospital in Britain, where she was receiving treatment for gallstones. Both mother and baby, which weighed 6.5 pounds (2.9 kilograms), were reported doing well. The baby had been expected on Feb. 24.

"The decision to perform and earlier delivery was taken in view of the threatening biliary and pancreatic bladder stones and severe pain, Naseer Sheikh, an adviser to Ms. Bhutto was quoted as say

Ms. Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, has been in jail since October 1990 on a variety of charges ranging from corruption to extortion. He has denied his guilt and has yet to be convicted of any crime.

West asks Mobutu to give up power

KINSHASA (Zaire), Feb 4 Mutinous troops held two key army bases in the capital Thursday as Western governments stepped up pressure on President Mobutu Sese Seko to surrender his 27-year monopoly on power, reports AP. Few shots were heard

overnight, and there was no Majumder also said that unsign that Mobutu's presidential guards were preparing new attacks on the two camps. On Tuesday night. 20 pres

idential guards were killed in an unsuccessful attempt to take Camp Kokolo, near downtown Kinshasa, military sourccs said.

Student bodies condemn alleged interference in by-elections

By DU Correspondent Different student organisa tions yesterday condemned the alleged interference of the ruling party in Mirpur by-elec-

tion held Wednesday. The pro-Awami League Chhatra League (M-I) yesterday brought out a procession and held protest rally in front of the DUCSU building.

Addressing the rally the BCL (M-I) leaders protested the controversial results of the by-election. The leaders also alleged

that the role of the ruling party was no less than that of the previous autocrats. The Ganatantrik Chhatra Ofkya (GCO) in a statement yesterday also condemned the

naked interference' of the government bypassing the Election Commission in the by-election. Meanwhile, the JSQ (Inu) backed Chhatra League (B-K) in a statement yesterday re-

sented the alleged interfer-

ence of the ruling party in the Mirpur by-election. The BCL (B-K) president Ruhul Quddus Babu and general secretary Adbullahil Quycum in the statement termed the government role regarding the by-election as an undemocratic one.

The BCL (B-K) urged the Election Commission to keep bold attitude in such situation

3 kidnapped youngmen rescued

MANIKGANJ, Feb 4: Police rescued three youngmen, kid napped from Dhaka, in unconscious condition from a minibus at Nabagram on the Manikganj-Jitka road today (Thursday), reports UNB.

The youngmen were brought here in a minibus of the Gulistan-Mohammadpur route in the capital. All their belongings were looted after they lost their senses. Police suspect a gang of or

ganised miscreants to be involved in the kidnap. Identities of the victims were not known. They were admitted to Manikgani Sadar

hospital sources said. A case has been filed with Manikganj police in this connection. None was yet arrested.

Hospital in critical condition,

AL calls hartal From Page 1 Col 5

week-long half-day hartal in the Mirpur constituency from Saturday excepting the day of holy Shab-e-Barat of February

The briefing was held at 9

pm at the conference room of the Opposition Leader in the Parliament. Mohammad Nasim alleged that their agents were forced out of the control room and

result despatching was stopped mid-way of the counting. He said that Dhaka Met repolitan Police Commissioner Raqibul Huda acted in favour of the ruling party and helped the Assistant Returning Officer

to manipulate the result. The Opposition chief whip said that their polling agents were not supplied with any result sheets signed by the presiding officer and demanded reelection in those 16 centres.

He did not however give any list of the centres during the briefing but said it was given to the House by Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina. The autocrat is ousted but

autocracy still remain. This government just changes the technique and hijacks result sheets instead of booths, Nasim said He said that the constitution which provides indepen-

dence and neutrality to the

Election Commission was challenged by the ruling party during the election. Moreover, it (ruling party) used police forces to repress the people and AL workers of

"Our programmes are aimed at protesting these anomalies and we also stage walkout to protest it." he said. Al. candidate Kamal Majum-

der, who was also present

the Mirpur areas.

during the briefing, gave a brief picture of alleged police atrocities by police during the hartal on Thursday in Mirpur. He said that more than 100 of his party workers were injured in police actions and 40

others arrested during Thurs-

day's half-day hartal in Mirpur. He alleged that police stormed different establishments of the AL supporters including his election camps and business centre "the best denim apparel". Police arrested two employees from the garments factory.

ruly BNP workers also terrorised several parts of Mirpur but police refused receiving any complaints. The Al. leaders also alleged that wife of Mirpur 4 Ward

house Thursday.

leader Tofael Ahmed was in-

jured when police attacked his

The Midnight File

France drafts new proposal on deported Palestinians

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 4: France has drafted a new proposal that would renew UN pressure on Israel to return a group of deported Palestinians. But the United States says it's time to leave the issue behind and concentrate on restarting Mideast peace talks, reports AP.

Violence claims 18 in Medellin

BOGOTA (Colombia), Feb 4: At least 18 people, including businessmen, a police officer and a soccer star, have been killed in Medellin in 24 hours of murder and police violence. according to news reports Thursday. Local soccer star, Omar Canas, and two unidentified men were found murdered Thursday in Medellin, said Caracol radio.

Police killed four suspected terrorists after a high-speed chase south of Medellin Wednesday. The men were transporting some 130 kilos (286 pounds) of dynamite, according to police, reports AP.

Mohsin elected

From Page 1 Col 4 Wednesday night.

He also expressed ignorance about the news sources quoted by the private United News of Bangladesh (UNB) news agency and the official Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS). However, Rahman said there were scopes for these agencies to collect total resuits before being compiled by the EC from all 117 centres.

We finished the announcement of centrewise results (of 117 centres) at 11:15 pm but tabulation of those were not done till then," he

According to the Returning Officer, results started coming from the polling centres at 6:30 pm. A copy of the result sheet was sent to the Election Commission and two copies to the control room at DC's office. Moreover, the Returning Officer claimed, a copy of the

result sheet was supplied to

each of the polling agents of

the 18 candidates. At this stage, when counting in 78 centres was completed, trouble began.

Amid clashes and cracker blasts followed by gunshots the officials stopped tabulating and got ready to leave the control room, the Assistant Returning Officer said. But

Indian citizen held with gun in Khagrachhari

CHITTAGONG, Feb 4 Security personnel yesterday arrested an Indian national with gun from Matiranga thana in Klasgrachari district near the border with India while his accomplices believed to be members of the outlawed Shantibahini fled, reports BSS.

Official sources said the Shantibahini insurgent group moving within Banglade territory near the border being challenged by the patrolling security personnel fled leaving

one behind. The security personnel handed him over to Matiranga police station. He has been arrested. He told police that he is an Indian national, Chikanchand Chakma is his name and lives at Joytunpara in India:

The insurgents are indulging in terrorist activities in spite of the ceasefire until March 31 following the talks between the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti and the government.

Rallies at Shaheed Minar banned for two days

By DU Correspondent The Dhaka University authorities have banned the holding of processions or rallies in the Central Shaheed Minar premises from 8 am on February 20 till end to the Ekushey programme on February 21. A meeting chaired by

Professor Emajuddin Ahmed Vice-Chancellor and attended by teachers, students and officers of the university appealed to the people to help maintain an atmosphere befitting the significance of the day. The meeting also urged the

political parties not to hang portraits or stick posters on the Shaheed Minar, the national memorial commemorating the martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952.

The Dhaka University coordinates and supervises the observance of the national day that commemorates the glorious movement.

Juba Dal meet today An emergency meeting of

Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal Dhaka city unit will be held today at 4 pm at the residence of the Mayor of Dhaka Mirza Abbas. All leaders of the city unit, Presidents and General Secretaries of all thanas and wards have been requested to attend the meeting on time, reports BSS

they could not go out because of the trouble outside, he

At this stage, Raqibul Huda, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner entered into the room, the DC said

The DC admitted that Huda

was not asked to come," I did not invite him," he said but later told reporters that Huda did not enter forcibly. The Returning Officer apparently trying to help his ju-

nior colleague, defended the entry of the Police officer say ing that as the DMP chief Huda had been dealing with the law and order and his entry was justified. Asked what Huda was doing

in the room, neither the

Returning Officer nor did his deputy give any answer. At 10:30 pm the Chief Election Commissioner rushed to the control room and then tabulation resumed in his

presence, they said. The result that was supplied to the press by the public relations officer of the EC was prepared at that time, the officials said

A total of 1.68,208 votes were cast out of 2,76,864 voters' turn out was 61.06 per cent. A total of 166578 votes were found valid and 1626 were cancelled.

Nirmul Body confce Feb 11-12

By Staff Correspondent The Ghatak-Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Samannaye Committee at a meeting Thursday called upon all to make its conference of representatives to be

held February 11 and 12 a suc-February 11 in the second founding anniversary of the

committee. Five representatives from each district and three from each thana will participate in the conference.

The meeting of the Samannaye Committee, presided over by its convener Jahanara Imam, was addressed by Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Kazi Aref Ahmed, Nurul Islam Nahid, Abdullah Sarker, Col Abu Osman Chowdhury and Shahrier Kabir.

Five results

From Page 1 Col 5 The UNB released another report quoting Salauddin Ahmed, MP, the chief election agent of the BNP candidate, as saying that BNP got 79,118 votes while AL got 76,434

On the other hand several newspapers reported Al. claim of victory by 1800 votes

However, none of the results were announced from the Election Commission office at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar but when contacted, an EC sources said that they got a copy of

AL complaint

From Page 1 Col 5

the returning officer.

Returning Officer's result.

In the seven-page com plaint, he said that the government violated Article 119 (1) of the Constitution by having the election results announced bypassing the Election Commission.

It said that the Chief Election Commissioner him self told the press that the commission did not provide any results but a fabricated result was feeded to the government and non-government media which vitiated the whole atmosphere.

Jahangir who is also a Member of Parliament said that the AL polling agents in 14 centres were not given result sheets signed by the presiding officers and the results were further manipulated during counting in the control He also alleged inter-

ferences by the government agencies and said the declaration of the unofficial results without the knowledge of the Election Commission was unconstitutional He appealed for fresh

polling in 14 centres without mentioning the name of the centres.