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Benazir accuses Sharif of harassment

ISLAMABAD, June 17: Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto accused Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government on Wednesday of harassing her and her followers despite its avowed commitment to political rapprochement, reports Reuters.

In a speech to parliament she called on the beleaguered government to reach a quick settlement on political issues with opposition parties before it was too late.

Bhutto, opening the National Assembly (lower house) debate on the budget for fiscal 1993-94, said the telephones of her and her family were bugged, she was under surveillance by the government's intelligence bureau and her mail was being censored.

"Shame, shame," cried deputies of her People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) when she levelled the charges a day after opposition and government negotiators reported progress in reconciliation talks.

Sharif initiated the talks after the Supreme Court restored his government last month, 39 days after he was summarily sacked by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan.

No government comment was immediately available. "It does not bode well for the democratic credentials of a born-again democratic regime to keep the leader and members of the opposition under tabs," Bhutto said.

She said Sharif's government was continuing what she called "political and economic persecution" of the opposition, citing special courts that have been hearing charges against her and several of her close aides for nearly three years.

These trials were initiated after Ishaq Khan sacked Bhutto as premier in August 1990 after just 20 months in

office and ordered fresh elections, which Sharif won.

PDA representatives demanded mid-term elections in October in talks on Tuesday with the government, which appeared to roll back from its longtime opposition to polls before the expiry of its five-year term in late 1995.

Bhutto said her three-point formula for a solution to present disputes comprised formation of a national government of all parties, introduction of constitutional reforms and immediate fresh elections under that constitutional package.

"There is no other way forward."

She advised Sharif's government to act before the euphoria of his court victory in his power struggle with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan died down.

"Act now, act before it is too late, to build democracy, the rule of law, a just and egalitarian society," she said.

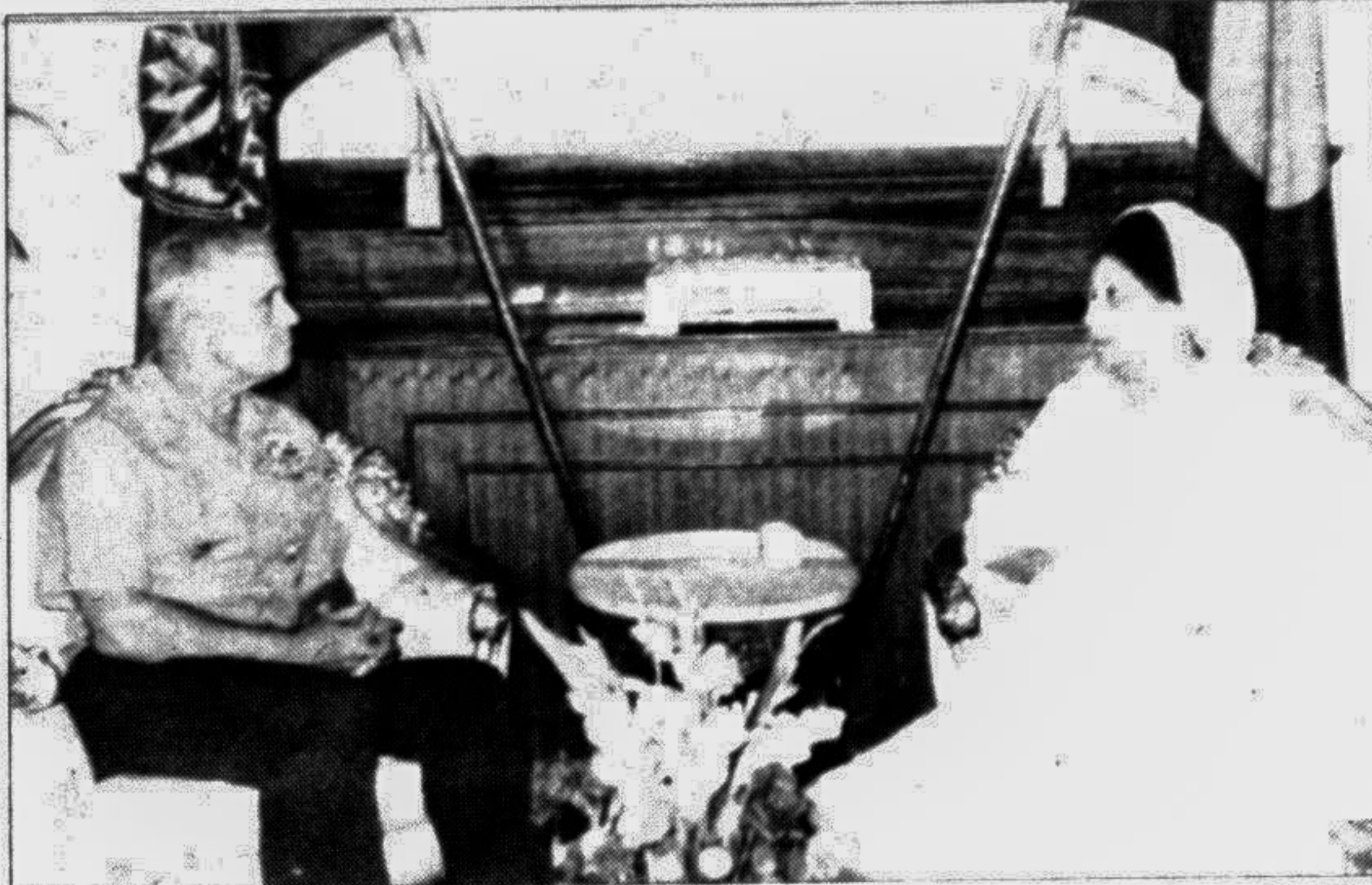
Since the May 26 Supreme Court restoration of his government, Sharif has faced hostile governments in all four provinces.

"What stability, what strength can a beleaguered federal government give to Pakistan when its writ does not run beyond Islamabad?" Bhutto asked.

"Let us both together, harbingers of a new generation, think of the national interest," she told Sharif. "Let us put the country first."

Sharif needs Bhutto's support to obtain the two-thirds majority needed in parliament to amend the constitution and curb the President's power to dissolve parliament.

Bhutto's representatives said on Tuesday they wanted the government to announce a date for elections before the two sides discussed constitutional and electoral reforms.



Marine Lieutenant General Henry C Stackpole, Commander of US Marine Forces Pacific and Commanding General, Fleet Marine Forces Pacific, yesterday called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office — PID photo

Changes in administration

By Staff Correspondent

A few more transfers and appointments under different ministries were announced yesterday.

Under the new arrangement, Saifur Rahman who was an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Ministry of Establishment has been appointed the Director General (DG) of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption, according to a PID handout.

Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Bir Bikram, OSD in the Establishment Ministry has been appointed the Secretary of the Food Ministry.

Additional Secretary Fazlur Rahman, OSD in the Establishment Ministry, has been given additional charges of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning.

Joint Secretary of the Finance Ministry Sohail Ahmed Chowdhury has been made the Managing Director of the House Building Finance Corporation.

Brigadier Kazi Mahmud Hossain psc has been appointed the Chairman of the Khulna Development Authority.

DC-10 pilot

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The source said that the ZIA's control tower tape would be cross checked with that of the "black box" in which the conversation between the Dhaka control and the pilot was also recorded.

The decoding of the "black box" would make it clear under what circumstances Captain Azizullah made the risky landing of the aircraft on a flight from Jeddah on May 18.

Some 135 passengers and crew survived unhurt while the aircraft sustained major structural damage during the landing.

Group Captain Nazmul Huq Chowdhury, Director (Operation) of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAAB) and Chairman of the probe body flew to London Wednesday with the "black box" for its decoding.

The committee would finalise its report after getting the transcript of the "black box", one Civil Aviation source said, adding that submission of the final report might be delayed by two to three weeks. He did not elaborate.

The committee was given one month's time to complete the investigation. That deadline expires June 20.

The source said that initial findings point to pilot error.

Meanwhile, the manufacturers of the DC-10, McDonnell Douglas, have submitted a report assessing the damage of the aircraft which, they feel, needs structural repairing, electrical re-wiring, engine overhauling and other components testing.

The representatives of the manufacturers who flew into the capital immediately after the accident, left Dhaka last week to consult their headquarters and to finalise the damage assessment and translate it into financial terms.

Engineers of Biman and Alitalia were now continuing with initial repair works at the ZIA hangar.

Chakrapong returns to Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, June 17:

Prince Norodom Chakrapong, who led a secessionist movement in the eastern provinces before fleeing to Vietnam, returned to Cambodia

Russia, Ukraine agree to split Black Sea Fleet

MOSCOW, June 17: Russia and Ukraine agreed today to speed up plans to divide the Black Sea Fleet of the former Soviet Navy between them and build their own naval forces in the region, an official communique stated, reports AFP.

The agreement, signed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk following one-day summit talks north of Moscow, stipulated that the Russian fleet would remain based at the Crimean port of Sevastopol and other parts of Ukraine.

The communique said the two leaders had signed the agreement in principle and left lower officials to work out details.

Under an accord reached last summer, the fleet was to have remained under joint command until 1995 by which time final plans for its division were to have been ready.

The agreement reached by Yeltsin and Kravchuk on dividing the fleet is subject to ratification by the parliaments of both countries, the communique stated.

The dispute over the powerful fleet has been a chief sore point in relations between the two states since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 and has rekindled a dispute over which country should control the Crimea.

The communique also stated that Yeltsin had agreed to offer Ukraine unspecified security guarantees once its parliament ratified the START-I nuclear disarmament treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).



Australian male beauty queen, Damian Taylor brushing his hair prior to a television interview in Australia yesterday. Taylor has received unprecedented attention from overseas media and model agencies caught up with the idea of a man breaking through the female bastion of beauty contests. — AFP photo

Uphold human rights

From Page 1 Col 5

cept of the human rights and present state of human rights situations in different parts of the world, said violations of human rights are taking place despite many a measure taken up by the international community to prevent such violations.

He said human rights violations are taking place in different places sometimes in small manner and sometimes in a massive way.

"It is our observation that the more powerful is the violator the lesser is the action it draws from world community whereas the less powerful draws almost all kinds of attention and actions", the Foreign Minister said.

Rahman referred to so many resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council and other agencies and added that pathetically the human rights violations still go on.

"They are going on not far from here — in the heart of Europe, the Middle East, in Africa and in many other places," he said and noted with extreme pain that somehow the Muslims, whether minority or majority, are victims of worst human rights violations in most cases.

"They are even denied the basic rights of self-defence and self-determination" the Foreign Minister said, adding

Four killed in Ctg road mishap

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 17: Four people were killed and eight others injured in a tragic road mishap in front of Reazuddin Bazar, located in the heart of the city here late Wednesday night, police said.

Among the dead only one person was identified as Abul Kalam.

The injured persons, mostly labourers, were admitted in the Chittagong Medical College Hospital, doctors said.

They are Abul Kasem, 20, Md Zafar, 30, Mushtaq Ahmed, 30, Abdul Hamid, 20, Badshah Meah, 22, Md Amin, 27, Mofazzal Nabi, 25, and Aminul Haque, 40.

According to police, the driver of a bus — Chatta Metro Ba-02-0014 — suddenly lost control while taking a turn at 2:30 am and ran over some labourers engaged in unloading vegetables from a truck — Chatta Metro Ta-02-0044 — in front of Reazuddin Bazar.

Two persons died on the spot while two others succumbed to their injuries at the CMCH. Immediately after the accident both the drivers of bus and the truck fled the scene.

A case was filed in this connection with Kotwali police.

Police still hunting for Akhtaruzzaman

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 17: Police continued their hunt here for Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, an accused in the murder of businessman Humayun Zahir, but could not locate him yet.

A senior police official here said, "We are making all out efforts in collecting information about Babu's whereabouts in a bid to arrest him."

Meanwhile, sources said that there has been a rumour about Babu fleeing the country, spread with the intention of diverting the attention of law enforcing agencies.

Earlier, Kotwali thana police here raided the hill-top residence of Babu at Sarson Road and attached all movable property.

The attachment was done as per order issued by the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.

The court also issued the warrant of arrest against Akhtaruzzaman when he failed to surrender to the court by June 12 after cancellation of his ad-interim bail.

Leading businessman Humayun Zahir was shot dead at his Dhanmondi residence in Dhaka on April 8.

60 killed

From Page 1 Col 4

in the direction of Aided's residence. His militia is held responsible for the June 5 slaying of 23 Pakistani peacekeepers.

Small arms fire rattled round the ruined capital and reporter said battles were raging between UN forces and Somali gunmen along the October 21 Road, where the Pakistanis were ambushed.

Unconfirmed reports said the convoy of tanks and armoured personnel carriers was surrounded by an angry mob as it neared Aided's residence.

Reporters watching from the roof of a hotel in Central Mogadishu saw the sky around Aided's residence glow orange from the flame of burning ammunition. A house belonging to one of Aided's closest supporters, Ahmed Omar Jess, was on fire.

UN Special Representative Jonathan Howe said he had ordered General Aided's arrest following UN investigations into the deaths of 23 Pakistanis, allegedly killed by Aided's militia, and the deaths of Somali civilians allegedly used as human shields by Aided gunmen during an attack on the Pakistanis.

"General Aided at this point is a threat to the safety of Somalis and to the international community and therefore he must be detained," Howe said.

Aided will be charged with crimes against humanity, another UN spokesman said.

Aided will also be charged with conspiracy to carry out unpremeditated acts against UN forces and incitement to violence, said Joe Sills, spokesman for UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The Midnight File

Muslims reject new Serb-Croat peace plan

BONN, June 17: Bosnia's Muslim President, Alija Izetbegovic today rejected a new Croat-Serb peace plan for Bosnia and said it could lead to fresh ethnic cleansing.

He was speaking to reporters after meeting German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. On Wednesday, representatives of the Muslims, Serb and Croat foes agreed in Geneva on a plan that raised the prospect of a three-day ethnic carve-up of Bosnia, reports Reuters.

16 Armenian troops killed in clash with Azeris

YEREVAN, June 17: At least 16 Armenian soldiers and civilians have been killed and another 40 injured in fighting in the past two days between Azerbaidjani troops and separatist Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, the enclave's military leaders said today, reports AFP.

Debate on budget

From Page 1 Col 4

The BNP MP, expressing concern over the low price of agricultural products, sought protection of the interests of the farming community.

He also criticised the imposition of duties on book imports. The MP felt that this duty should be withdrawn to ensure modern education in the country.

Thirty MPs from the Treasury and Opposition Benches took part in yesterday's discussions spread over two sittings.

Suranjit Sengupta of the Ganatantri Party (GP) criticised the Finance Minister for liberalisation of the import policy.

No developed country, pleading for free market economy, should compromise protection of their local products," Suranjit said, adding that Bangladesh also had no alternative but to protect its own industrial products.

The GP leader felt that the nation had been suffering from poverty only because past governments had failed to utilise the country's huge human resources. He proposed a national dialogue of the democratic political parties to find ways and means of utilising the human resources and thus alleviating poverty.

The GP MP also advised the ruling BNP to build an effective rapport with the opposition to ensure political stability, which he felt was very important for a sound investment climate and increased production.

Begum Rabeya Chowdhury of the Treasury Bench appreciated the budget for its proposed 'food-for-education' programme. She felt that the programme would check dropouts at the primary level.

The lady MP pleaded for increasing allocation for all the sectors meant for women. Though women constituted about fifty per cent of the country's population they were still lagging behind in all areas at the end of the 20th century, she complained.

Road Division

From Page 1 Col 7

the preparatory work for the JMB project against an allocation of Tk 12 crore for fiscal 1992-93. Progress in the work during the year was, however, estimated by the authorities at 53.50 per cent against 60.15 per cent expenditure of the allocated fund.

About Tk 14 crore sanctioned as project aid for the Roads Development Project will remain unutilised at the end of the current financial year against the total project aid of Tk 114 crore, sources said. The progress in implementing the project was, however, officially estimated at 66.41 per cent.

The allocation for the project was Tk 146 crore of which Tk 101.58 crore has been spent till April.

The progress on the Feeder Road Development Project was estimated at 61.20 per cent.

According to sources, Tk 48.85 crore was spent till April 30 against an allocated fund of Tk 68 crore for the project. An additional Tk 3 crore will be required to complete the work, yet about Tk 10 crore allocated as project aid will remain unutilised, the sources said.

The performance relating to the Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project, which was planned to be completed in two phases, has also reported to be disappointing. Only the first phase of the project will have been completed by June 30, the end of the fiscal year.

Total expenditure for the project till April last was Tk 68.03 crore against a grant of Tk 132.80 crore. About Tk 25 crore earmarked as project aid for the work will remain unutilised against a total allocation of Tk 101.29 crore.

Wet weather

From Page 1 Col 4

forced most people of stay indoors while traffic also became thin on the city roads.

US House body report

From Page 1 Col 7

the state of democracy in Bangladesh mentioned that (i) "salutes the people of Bangladesh for their success in bringing democracy to their country." However, it observed "that democratic institutions in Bangladesh are still fragile and vulnerable."

The committee members wished the people of Bangladesh "well in their quest for a stable democracy" and said it is "prepared to support requests that would help promote the objective."

Besides its concern about political pluralism, human rights and economic development in Bangladesh, the House Subcommittee showed its interest in the plight of the approximately 2,50,000 " Rohingya refugees who had fled into Bangladesh seeking to escape persecution by the military regime in Burma."

The report noted that "Bangladesh has been remarkably hospitable to the Rohingyas, despite the strain this has placed on scarce Bangladeshi resources." It went on to mention that "Unfortunately, credible reports surfaced last year indicating that the Rohingyas were coercing some refugees to return to Burma, and had denied UN personnel free access to Rohingya refugee camps, in violation of earlier Bangladeshi pledges."

However, the Subcommittee stated that it "is pleased to receive more recent reports indicating that the Rohingyas have stopped offering officials representing the UN High Commissioner for Refugees more access to the camps."

The report lauded the May 1993 agreement between Bangladesh and the UN governing access to refugee transit camps and called upon the government of Bangladesh to continue "its cooperation with UNHCR and other relief agencies in an effort to alleviate some of the hardships faced by these unfortunate refugees." The Subcommittee members supported a generous US contribution to the UN Rohingya relief effort.

The Subcommittee also took note of an agreement signed between Bangladesh

and India "to repatriate thousands of Chakma tribes people who fled their homes in the early 1980s to escape fighting by Shanti Bahini rebels seeking autonomy for the Chittagong Hill Tracts bordering India and Burma."

The Subcommittee stated that it joins with the (US) executive branch "in urging that this 20-year-old insurgency be settled by peaceful negotiation". It mentioned that it was "pleased to note (that) a dialogue between Dhaka and the Shanti Bahini appears to be underway", and added that the (committee) members "will continue to monitor reports of human rights violations by either the Shanti Bahini or the government in the Hill Tracts."

Party stalwarts, failing to read the mind of the PM, speculated that the chairperson would deliver an important speech cautioning the MPs and ministers like Nurul Huda who have already raised some controversies.

"It will be an open floor to discuss organisational and other party affairs," one party MP said.

He also said the winding-up speech of the chairperson as Leader of the House on the budget debate later this month and issues like the long-pending National Council of the party may also feature in today's discussions.

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder told the Daily Star last night: "No specific resolution will be adopted after the meeting because there is no agenda."

He said the meeting would be limited to organisational issues.

He refuted speculation that the meeting was convened ahead of a possible cabinet shake-up.

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