

Deadline to Saddam Hussein likely UNSC backs Bush demand, says 'no' to use of force

AP, United Nations

Security Council members echoed President Bush's demand for Iraq to admit UN weapons inspectors, and key nations indicated they would support giving Saddam Hussein a deadline to comply.

But after Bush told the council to confront the "grave and gathering danger" posed by Iraq or stand aside as the United States acts, no council nation backed the use of force if Saddam continues to say no.

Many council members, Arab countries, and other UN member states focused on Bush's decision to give the United Nations a chance to avoid a confrontation.

Foreign ministers from the five veto-wielding nations on the Security Council the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France discussed Iraq over lunch Friday with Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov read a statement on behalf of the five permanent members saying Iraq's failure to comply with council resolutions "is a serious problem." They also said consultations had begun to decide how the council can tackle the problem of implementation.

British Foreign Secretary Jack

Straw told reporters after the meeting there was "complete unanimity about the imperative of getting the weapons inspectors back into Iraq."

"I think it's fair to say (there is) a very clear understanding that if we're going to set an imperative to get those weapons inspectors back, then that has to mean a time limit," he said.

But Straw, whose country has been the strongest supporter of the United States, said time was needed for detailed discussions on resolutions about Iraq.

"What we're looking at first is concepts and then only later we'll come on to the detailed wording, but so far so good," he said.

Secretary of State Colin Powell spent the day lobbying the 15 council members, Arab countries, and other UN members to support Bush's proposal.

"We're off to a good start," he said. They all "recognise the challenge that Iraq does present to international law and to the mandate of the Security Council."

Powell said US Ambassador John Negroponte would follow up with individual meetings next week with other council members. Vice President Dick Cheney was also planning to come to New York next week.

Sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait cannot be lifted until UN inspectors certify that its weapons of mass destruction have been destroyed.

Inspectors left the country four years ago ahead of U.S. and British airstrikes to punish Iraq for not cooperating with inspections.

Since then, Iraq has refused to allow inspectors to return, and the stalemate has split the Security Council several times.

Ivanov, whose country is Iraq's closest ally on the council, called for a political settlement and urged Iraq to comply with council resolutions. China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan echoed the plea for more diplomacy.

Their focus on political not military action indicated how tough it will be to get council authorisation for an attack on Iraq.

While Ivanov reiterated Moscow's opposition to unilateral U.S. military action against Iraq, he also indicated that what happens to Iraq is up to Saddam.

He told Russian reporters in New York "if Iraq refuses to cooperate with the UN Security Council, the Iraqi government will take responsibility itself for possible consequences," the Interfax news agency reported.

French President Jacques Chirac has proposed a two-step approach, which some diplomats say would avert a divisive split in the council early on.

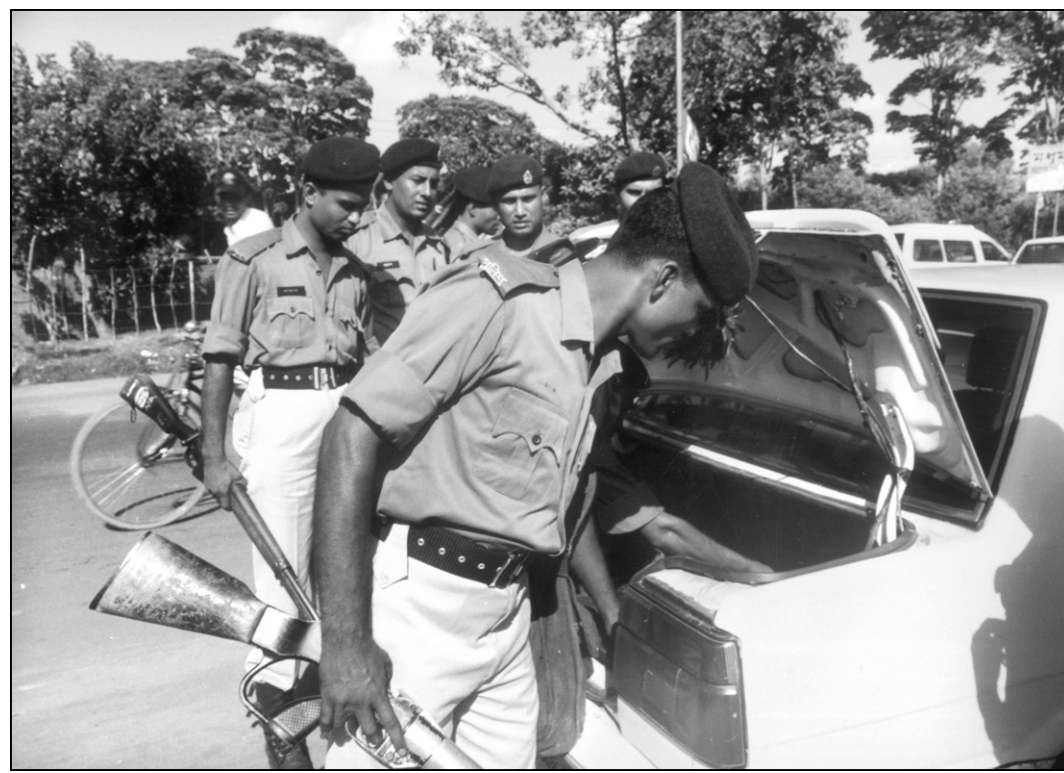
An initial resolution would set a short deadline for Iraq to let inspectors return. If Iraq refuses, or seeks to undermine their work, the Security Council would then consider action against Iraq. A senior US official said Washington is open to the French proposal.

France hasn't endorsed military action, but hasn't ruled it out. French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said Friday that "the best way forward" is the return of inspectors.

During his day of lobbying, Powell also met the 10 non-permanent council members, whose terms rotate every two years.

Arab ministers grasped at Bush's decision to go the United Nations as an opportunity to avert war.

Syria's UN Ambassador Mikhail Wehbe, whose country is on the council, said he was waiting to see what "formula" the council proposes. He backed the Arab position that opposes an attack on Iraq, but calls for its compliance with UN resolutions.



Police search a private car as part of tightened security on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

UZ on the way back

FROM PAGE 1

decided to hold the upazila election...we'll soon place the recommendations before the cabinet meeting for final approval," said the LGRD minister.

The cabinet headed by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia formed a five-member sub-committee at a meeting on November 19 last year to review the reintroduction of the upazila system. The committee submitted a set of recommendations to the cabinet meeting for holding the election by amending some laws.

The committee consisted of LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Industries Minister MK Anwar and the then information minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan who was replaced by Tariqul Islam later.

At the time, Huda reminded the committee that a local government committee was formed in 1992, after abolition of the upazila system, which suggested a three-tier local government and introduction of the non-elected thana development and coordination council.

Upon this argument, the prime minister instructed Bhuiyan to include Huda in the sub-committee and review his recommendations.

Later, Khaleda at her meeting with ministers and the officials of the LGRD ministry asked them to immediately submit recommendations on all local government bodies.

She was undecided about the upazila polls, as the majority of MPs opposed the concept in fear of a hindrance to their authority.

Khaleda's nod of agreement came after most grass-roots delegates to the BNP's divisional representatives meetings demanded the upazila election.

Upon their demand, Khaleda ordered the cabinet committee to hold a meeting soon and place its recommendations. Instructed, Bhuiyan convened a meeting, which

yesterday approved the upazila parishad and recommendations prepared by the LGRD ministry.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Bhuiyan said that there would be no conflict of interests if the recommendations were implemented.

Each MP will be given Tk 1 crore a year for local development. The MPs will take up projects for development in their constituencies, with the upazila parishad, in some cases, implementing them.

An office quipped with a computer, telephones and secretarial staff will be set up in the MP's constituency.

Bhuiyan said only one member of the committee, Huda, differed with the concept, as he wanted a three-tier local government.

The concept of the gram sarkar will also be placed before the cabinet for approval soon and its structure has been finalised, Bhuiyan added.

He said recommendations and amendments to strengthen the union council, the municipal corporation and the zila parishad will also be submitted to the cabinet soon.

The first elections to the 460 upazila parishads were held on May 16 and 20 in 1985 for a five-year term.

The next polls staggered for ten days beginning on March 14, 1990.

The BNP, coming to power in 1991, nullified the Upazila Parishad Act.

But the Awami League after assuming power through the 1996 general election revived the Upazila Parishad Act on November 25, 1998, which prescribes that the election must be held in 180 days after the law is gazetted.

Accordingly, the Election Commission took several initiatives to hold the polls, but due to opposition by the AL government, the EC had to backtrack.

As the 180-day period was about to expire, the AL government took a new move to extend the timeframe by amending the law.

The amended law says the

government can hold the upazila parishad polls in 180 days or at a convenient time later in case of "force majeure" through a gazette notification.

This time, the cabinet committee on the upazila parishad decided to amend the provision and give the authority back to the Election Commission.

Meter-reader

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and a senior police officer rushed to the court to impede submission of the chargesheet against the millionaire meter reader, the sources said. However, the chargesheet had been filed by the time they reached the court.

A complaint filed with the CMM's Court said, through brokers, Mahubb had obtained a passport using fake names and address and without permission from the Titas management.

He visited a number of countries using the passport in gross violation of the Passport Act.

Investigations also revealed that the meter-reader had been shown present in the attendance book while he was abroad.

The Detective Branch meanwhile collected strong evidence of Mahubb's involvement in gross irregularities in Titas. However, the authorities have not yet taken any disciplinary action against him.

Sources said the millionaire meter-reader might go scot-free as he enjoys blessings of an influential cabinet member.

The minister is trying to get Mahubb off the hook, they added.

Mahubb was arrested under 54 of the CrPC from Zia International Airport on April 27 prior to his departure to Singapore as he was carrying a fake passport for the trip.

DU reopens

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protesting the July 24 police atrocities on female students of Shamsunnahar Hall. In the wake of the agitation, the then VC Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury and proctor Prof Nazrul Islam stepped down on July 31.

Prof Haider was made acting VC and given the responsibility of reopening the university as early as possible.

Earlier on August 29, the syndicate at an emergency meeting had decided that the university would reopen on September 12 and the residential halls on September 8.

But a hurriedly called syndicate meeting on September 4 changed the earlier decision, apprehending fresh students agitation. Press reports at that time said some quarters were conspiring to vitiate the campus situation prior to reopening of the university.

Quake hits Andaman: Two killed

AFP, Madras

At least two people were killed yesterday in an earthquake measuring 6.0 on the Richter scale near an Indian island in the Bay of Bengal, officials said.

The tremor also brought down 40 houses in the Middle Andaman Island, Sami Acharya, president of the Society of Andaman and Nicobar Ecology, said in the eastern Indian city of Calcutta.

He said tidal waves triggered by the quake also lashed Ross and Smith islands.

"But there was no damage to Ross and Smith islands as the two places are mostly uninhabited," he said.

Some damage was also reported to a wharf where ships dock and to nearby houses, said Jagdish Narain Rao, a senior government shipping official.

An official at the meteorological department in New Delhi told AFP that the tremor occurred at around 3:59 am (22:29 GMT Friday) near the North Andaman Island.

"The epicentre of the quake lay a little offshore under the seabed," the official said.

About 300,000 people live in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago, home to a major Indian naval base.

BCL leader held with arms in Kushtia

UNB, Kushtia

A leader of Awami League backed Bangladesh Chhatra League was arrested with arms from Farakpur village in Bheramara upazila Friday night.

Bheramara thana Officer-in-Charge Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal nabbed Manik Mia, joint convener of upazila BCL, from Kili crossing area at about 10pm.

The OC also recovered a shutter gun loaded with bullets from him. A case was filed against him under the Arms Act. Police said he was wanted in two other cases.

JUTA

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election, the proctor's removal, introduction of a set of law against sexual harassment, withdrawal of police from campus, release of JU students arrested recently from the campus, creation of permanent posts for teachers appointed on temporary basis and two additional ambulances for the university medical centre.

On September 12, JU vice chancellor Prof Jasim Uddin Ahmed held talks with JUTA president Prof Amir Muhammad Ali and general secretary Prof Shamsul Alam Selim, but the talks produced no breakthrough.

Talking to The Daily Star, many senior teachers however said they would not budge from their stance to compel the authorities to fulfil their lawful demands.

The authorities, on the other hand, alleged that some teachers who were defeated in the last teachers' election were conspiring to disrupt the peace on campus.

Most of the agitating teachers are aligned to the BNP and most JUTA office-bearers are also affiliated with it.

Sources said after BNP came back to power, many of the mainstream pro-BNP teachers were sidelined, and the opinions of pro-Jamaat and pro-Jatiya Party teachers were reflected to a great extent in the affairs of the university.

Students apprehend that the teachers' agitation programme will create a volatile and unstable situation on campus.

Fish trader shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fish trader of Karwan Bazar area was gunned down in front of his residence in Mohammadpur in the city last night.

The dead is identified as Akhter Hossain, 35, son of late Abdul Haq Sarder. The victim was said to be an activist of Awami Sechchhasebak League.

Sources said armed miscreants shot Akhter and his brother-in-law Mostafa Talukder at about 9pm. Akhter was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died at about 10:30pm.

He was shot in the chest and the head.

Indians win

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pull of Sean Ervine to wicket-keeper Flower.

Zimbabwe began with their own flutter, losing two wickets in the first 10 overs.

But Flower was joined by brother Grant to add 84 for the third wicket in 16 overs.

Guy Whittall made 29 in a stand of 71, and Doug Mariller managed 14 in a sixth wicket stand of 41.

But his dismissal, caught at leg slip, left Zimbabwe 240 for six with five overs remaining.

Flower, dropped by Ashish Nehra at third man when he had managed just 15, passed the highest score ever at the Premadasa Stadium - Arjuna Ranatunga's 131 against India in 1997/98.

And he broke out of a three-way tie with his brother and former captain Dave Houghton, adding three runs to the Zimbabwean individual record.

Al-Qaida 'big fish'

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that city's radical Islamic quarter. He became friends with Atta and was recruited for the attacks because of his unwavering commitment to jihad against the West.

He moved in with Atta in November 1998 after dropping out of preparatory German classes for a college degree.

In early 1999 he spent two months at an al-Qaida training camp in Afghanistan, where he was assessed as a "trustworthy" operative. Western officials told the Washington Post.

Bin al-Shaiba has been identified by some Western intelligence officials as having attended an al-Qaida summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2000, where both the USS Cole bombing and the September 11 attacks were believed to have been discussed.

His presence in Yemen in August and September 2000 has raised suspicions that he may have been involved in the suicide attack on the USS Cole in October, which killed 17 American sailors.

He allegedly planned to take a direct role in the September 11 attacks as a pilot. Last year FBI director Robert Mueller said he would have joined the hijackers of United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after a passenger uprising against the air pirates, if he had managed to get a visa.

Bin al-Shaiba flew to Spain's Mediterranean coast in July 2001 for a final meeting with Atta before

25 injured as Rohingyas clash with police

BSS, Cox's Bazar

At least 25 people, including five policemen and Ansar, were injured in a clash between Rohingya refugees and law enforcers at Nayagaon Rohingya Refugee camp under Teknaf upazila here on Friday.

Police have so far arrested five persons for their alleged involvement in the incident.

Police and witnesses said the clash was erupted at about 2 pm when police and Ansar intercepted an agitation programme of the Rohingya refugees who were refusing to go back to their homes in Myanmar. Police opened several rounds of gunshots when the Rohingyas attacked them.

Police constables Borhan and Alamgir and Ansar members Mozaffar Hossain and Noor Mohammad suffered critical injuries. They were immediately taken to Teknaf Thana Health Complex and Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital.

The arrested Rohingya refugees are Syed Hossain, Selim, Mohammad Selim, Rais Ullah and Fatema Begum.

Additional police were deployed there.

50 hurt as soccer fans clash in Patuakhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 50 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of people during a football match at Dashmina upazila headquarters under Patuakhali district Friday afternoon.

Witnesses said, supporters of Charborhan and Banglabazar football teams clashed over a controversial decision of the umpire during the match.

Lawyers

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immediate separation of judiciary, repeal of the Special Powers Act, the Public Safety Act, the Law and Order Disruption Crimes (Speedy Trial) Act and all other 'black laws'.

The parishad also calls for establishment of a judicial service commission towards separation of the judiciary from the executive and amendment to section 115 of the Civil Procedure Act to allow review in the district judge's court against any lower-court verdict instead of going to the High Court.

Earlier, parishad observed countrywide work abstention on August 8 and September 5 to press home their demands.

The lawyers will form human chains at the bar associations across the country on September 19 and 26, the statement said.

Complainant of murder case shot dead in Luxmipur

BSS, Dhaka

Nurunnabi, the complainant of Chhatra League leader Biplab murder case at Luxmipur, was shot dead by miscreants at his house at Duttapara here in the early hours of yesterday.

Police said a gang of six miscreants entered the house of Nurunnabi father of Biplab, and shot him dead in front of his wife at about 2:30 am.

Biplab was killed by a group of miscreants on January 10.

Nurul Kabir, younger brother of Nurunnabi filed a case in this connection.

Deputy commissioner and superintendent of police (SP) visited the place of occurrence.

Police have already submitted the charge sheet accusing four persons in Biplab murder case.

10 hurt as pirates clash with law enforcers in Sundarbans

UNB, Satkhira

Ten people including a UP chairman and a police constable were wounded with bullets in a gunfight between pirates and police-BDR in the Sundarbans early yesterday.

The law enforcers came under attack by the pirates when they raided Atharobeki area in deep forest to rescue a six-year-old boy who was kidnapped on Tuesday.

Tapan, son of Barindra Mondal, was kidnapped from village Ramzannagar. The abductors demanded a ransom of Tk 6 lakh for his release.

Led by OC of Shyamnagar thana Kazi Ayubur Rahman, 15 policemen and 10 BDR personnel went to the area Thursday evening to rescue Tapan.

When the team reached Atharobeki early in the morning, the pirates opened fire on them. Police and BDR men returned fire, resulting in a gunfight the two sides.

At one stage, the pirates fled to deep forest.

Ramzannagar UP chairman Alamgir Haider, constable Probas, and eight villagers including Khokon, Abdu Sattar and Akkas received bullet wounds. The chairman and the villagers accompanied Police-BDR team in the hunt for kidnappers.

They were admitted to local clinics.

Law & order

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failed.

To a question, he said the Awami League MPs would discuss matters about their participation or strategy of discussion on the crucial issue today.

Meanwhile, the Awami League sources hinted that though the government party declined to discuss the burning issues like wheat scam, jet-fuel scandal, police attack on the Shamsunnahar Hall and price-spiral of essentials, the opposition lawmakers would try to press for discussion on those topics in the House.

The present autumn session would, however, be short-lived. It is due to be prorogued on Tuesday according to a decision of the business advisory committee headed by the Speaker.

Huda

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Is it not cheating the people? a reporter asked. He said, "We did not cheat the people. Rather, our opponent cheated the people and wanted to cheat more. We included the Upazila issue in the manifesto to protect people from their (opponent) cheating."

When pointed out that the Cabinet Committee approved reintroduction of the system and holding of Upazila election, he said, "There is scope to avoid the Upazila issue, and this time, we can easily do so, as we did during our previous tenure."

He dismissed as "completely false and baseless" a claim that donors are pressing for reintroduction of Upazila system.

When reminded that most of the grassroots level leaders at the recent representatives' meeting of BNP strongly demanded holding of Upazila polls, he said they want it because they want to be Upazila chairmen.

"They do not know its adverse effects. We can not accept all their demands without examining those," he added. He claimed that there is opinion both in favour and against the Upazila system.

He asserted that reintroduction of Upazila system will be "suicidal" because it will create serious conflicts between members of parliament and Upazila chairmen, destroy democracy and divide political parties.

UN efforts for peace

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changing security scenarios, the South Asian countries also came to the forefront in peacekeeping operations.

"We have already gathered wide experience peacekeeping and peace building operations both collectively and individually. Once our diplomatic initiative in reducing international tensions was also praised," she told the army personnel from different countries.

In this context, Khaleda recalled the role of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman in averting confrontation in the Gulf region and ending the Iran-Iraq war.

In continuity of that effort, the military officers of the country for the first time joined UN peacekeeping for supervising the cease-fire in the raging Iran-Iraq war, she said.

Since then, Khaleda said, Bangladesh has been sending her officers, troops and equipment for UN peacekeeping missions.

She noted with satisfaction that Bangladesh is making meaningful contribution to multifarious activities for world peace.

"It is my firm belief that this training will have a far-reaching and significant impact on peacekeepers for successful operation in multinational environment in the days to come," she said at the inaugural function at Shaheed Hasib Parade Square.

The prime minister said though the history of participation of Bangladesh in peacekeeping operations is not long, its contribution is in no way less important than any others'.

Bangladesh became the highest troops-contributing nation in UN peace-support operations.

So far, over 28,000 Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel have participated in 26 different UN peacekeeping missions. As of August 2002, a total of 5,356 officers and soldiers are deployed in

various ongoing UN missions in 10 countries.

While performing the noble task of PSO, 20 members of Bangladeshi peacekeepers, including four officers, have died. Another 36 Bangladeshi peacekeepers have sustained injuries in various armed actions, mine blast and other accidents.

Military contingents of six countries gave salute to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the Shaheed Hasib parade ground where Chief of General Staff of Army Major General ASM Ekramul Huq received her. Earlier, as the helicopter carrying Khaleda Zia landed at the Rajendrapur cantonment, Chief of UN Staff Lieutenant General Hasan Mashud Chowdhury received the premier.

Ministers, MPs, diplomats, chiefs of three services and civil and military high officials, among others, attended the inaugural ceremonies of the international event.

US Ambassador in Bangladesh Mary Ann Peters, Chief of Army Lieutenant General Hasan Mashud Chowdhury and Chief of General Staff Major General ASM Ekramul Huq also addressed the function.

Turning to multinational platoon exercises, the prime minister said alongside classical peacekeeping, the UN is also entrusted now with the multifunctional second-generation peacekeeping operation for creating a safe and sustainable environment for restoring democracy.

In this respect, she mentioned Haiti where Bangladesh was a proud partner