

UNSC closer to tough Iraq resolution

AFP, United Nations

The five veto-wielding powers of the UN Security Council yesterday inched towards agreement on defining tougher terms for weapons inspections in Iraq. Meanwhile, US warplanes attacked an Iraqi surface-to-air missile system in northern Iraq yesterday with precision guided munitions, the US military said. Three coalition aircraft struck the SA-3 launcher and its associated radar and "blew it up," a second US defense official said.

Russia's initial opposition to tough action against Iraq - which denies that it is pursuing the development of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons - is seen in Moscow as softening.

China is wary of military action, but sticks to an official line that it is too early to comment on any draft resolution.

French President Jacques Chirac, meanwhile, insisted on the "persistence" of the two-step approach backed by Paris for dealing with Iraq which involves two separate UN resolutions instead of one as sought by Washington and London.

The three permanent UN Security Council members are all coming under intense pressure from the United States and Britain, who prefer a single, tough resolution that would threaten an automatic recourse to force if Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein refuses to allow full and free inspections.

In Washington, the US Congress held a second day of debate on a resolution granting President George W Bush powers to wage war against Iraq but the measure was not expected to be adopted before Thursday.

Blair travels to Russia on today for two days of talks with President Vladimir Putin.

Jahangir says he and five others killed Shahadat

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Jahangir Alam Sikari in a confidential statement yesterday revealed that he and five others murdered ward commissioner Shahadat Hossain Sikder.

Jahangir told Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiq Anwar that Pichchi Hannan, Muhit, Muhit's two uncles and Shahid joined hands with him in killing the commissioner.

He was taken to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at about 2.00pm yesterday and sent to the Dhaka Central Jail after record of his confessions.

Jahangir was introduced to the commissioner by his bodyguard Babul a few days ago.

"I requested Shahadat to lend me his dredging machine, as I got a contract on dredging of the Buriganga River. But he did not give me the machine," he told the magistrate.

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60 RU students food poisoned: 12 hospitalised

RU CORRESPONDENT

Sixty students of Madar Bux Hall of Rajshahi University (RU) fell sick due to food poisoning after taking food at the dining hall yesterday.

Twelve of the students whose condition was critical were admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) while the rest were admitted to the university medical centre.

Another 150 students suffered diarrhoea yesterday after drinking water. They were undergoing treatment in the hall.

Hall sources said some 60 students felt pain in their stomach at 1.00 pm immediately after taking food in the hall dining room. They

were taken to the university medical Centre for treatment.

As seven of them fell seriously sick, they were taken to the RMCH at about 2.30pm. Three more were admitted to the RMCH at 5.00 pm and two at 7.00 pm as their condition deteriorated.

Pangash and Silver Carp fishes were on the menu in the dining hall, hall sources said.

The university authorities have set a temporary medical camp at Madar Bux Hall immediately.

Different student organisations supplied medicine, oral saline and safe drinking water to the sick students. Pro-Vice-chancellor of RU Prof. KAM Shahadat Hossain

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PHOTO: STAR

The paramilitary BDR personnel patrol the streets in the Narayanganj town yesterday as part of beefed-up security measures ahead of the Durga Puja.

Jubo Dal leader shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A ward-level leader of the Jubo Dal was gunned down at the Manik Mian Avenue in the city yesterday.

Habibur Rahman Parag, 28, a vice-president of the Ward No. 40 unit of the ruling party's youth front, was shot in the face, chest and abdomen at around 1:00pm. He was taken to the Samarita Hospital and pronounced dead on arrival. The body was later sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Family sources said Parag went out of his residence at around 12:30pm with two young men, one of them a local gangster called Abul.

According to witnesses, the three were having lunch at an Indira Road hotel when another young man came and called him out.

Parag walked along with the young man to a tree some 100 metres off, where the latter's companion waited on a motorcycle.

As they came near the motorcyclist, he pulled out a gun and emp-

tied the magazine on Parag. Then, he spent six more rounds on the victim before speeding away on the motorcycle, the witnesses said.

Local people said Parag had links with the ruling party and was a close associate of the commissioner of Ward No. 40, Anwaruzzaman Anwar.

Marufur Rahman Prodeep, elder brother of Parag, told The Daily Star that his brother was not actively involved in politics but had to maintain contact with some political leaders for his business.

He was a broker at the Rajdhani School complex-based Friday market of old cars.

Reason behind the murder could not be known. Sources however said he might have been killed as a sequel to rivalry over control of the old cars market.

Parag, son of late Fazlur Rahman and a resident of 96, West Razabazar in the city, was third among three brothers and a sister.

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'Opposition must be allowed to express its views in JS'

UNB, Dhaka

Commonwealth parliamentary delegation leader Tom Cox MP yesterday said the opposition should be allowed to express its views on important issues in parliament following the procedures for effective functioning of the legislature.

"We are great believers -- whether we're in the government or in the opposition in parliament as a place where you should be allowed to express your views along as per procedures," he told reporters after a long meeting of the team with opposition leader Sheikh Hasina at her parliament office.

Asked for his comment about violence against the opposition leader and the deputy leader of the opposition, Cox said they had heard

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Sylhet doctors call fresh strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Sylhet district unit of BMA (Bangladesh Medical Association) announced a fresh agitation programme yesterday to press for immediate arrest of the killers of Dr Aftab Hossain and to protest police's negligence in investigating the case.

The decision was announced from a press conference held at the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College conference Room yesterday afternoon.

The programme calls for observing strike at all government and private health institutions in the district on October 16 and 17, and boycott of private medical practice throughout the district on October 17.

The district BMA, which has currently been observing a one-hour strike from 9:00am to 10:00am every day as part of an earlier programme, will also bring out a procession from the district BMA office on the morning of October 17.

The speakers at the press conference condemned police's negligence in investigating the case saying that it was mysterious that the police have been unable to find the killers of Dr. Aftab even nearly a month after the murder. They said they didn't want the people to suffer due to the strike and therefore gave the police until October 16 to arrest the killers of the doctor.

Earlier, police arrested two people following a 72-hour ultimatum on 15 September, but failed to get any clue from them, the doctors said. Later, the police arrested two more, but the investigation had been almost stalled, they alleged.

The sensational Dr Aftab murder case was transferred to the Detective Branch last Saturday, as Golapganj police failed to arrest the killers even three weeks after the killing.

Dr Aftab Hossain, a popular physician of Golapganj upazila, was brutally murdered at Ghoshgaon village on the night of September 14, triggering widespread protests in the area and prompting doctors to go on strikes in the backdrop of police's failure to arrest the killers. The case was transferred to the DB following allegations of involvement of the Golapganj police in helping the killers to avoid arrest.



PHOTO: STAR

Suspects picked up in overnight raids by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) wait in custody yesterday. Police launched block raids to ensure peaceful celebration of the Durga Puja.

Pakistan goes to polls today

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistanis head to the polls today for the first general elections since President Pervez Musharraf's 1999 coup, with opinion polls showing a tight race between banned ex-premier Benazir Bhutto's party and a new pro-government party.

Voters will choose from 7,054 candidates to elect a national assembly and four provincial assemblies which were suspended and later disbanded by General Musharraf after he seized power.

Musharraf, the army chief, promised since his coup to restore the parliaments, reform institutions and build "genuine democracy",

charging that the four civilian governments before him had ruined Pakistan with corruption and misrule.

Critics say the elections will not bring an end to rule by the military, which has already governed Pakistan for 27 years of its 55-year history.

Branding the elections a sham, they charge that Musharraf has ensured the military a permanent place in the government through constitutional changes and tough electoral restrictions, which have seen the exiled Bhutto and scores of opposition candidates disqualified from the race.

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Train derails in Comilla: 20 hurt

UNB, Comilla

An express train was derailed allegedly due to wrong signal at Nangalkot here yesterday morning, injuring at least 20 passengers.

Railway sources and witnesses said three bogies of Jalalabad Express Train bound for Chittagong from Sylhet went off the track at about 8:00am at the outer signal of the local station for a "mistake made by the stationmaster".

Stationmaster Ilias Ahmed went into hiding after the accident, which disrupted rail communications through the area for hours.

Train services on the Dhaka-Chittagong and Chittagong-Sylhet routes resumed at about 1:00pm after a relief train sent in from Laksam cleared the railroad.

Some 15 trains remained stranded for about five hours, causing immense suffering to passengers.

Bashar spares blushes

AFP, Kimberley

Habibul Bashar stroked a stylish half-century but Bangladesh again failed to make a competitive total as they were bowled out for 151 in the third and final one-day international against South Africa at De Beers Diamond Oval here on

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 10		5-37 pm
Oct 11	5-54 am	

Prayer Timings		
Oct 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation