

China, Russia veto US on Myanmar

REUTERS, United Nations

China and Russia on Friday vetoed a US resolution calling on Myanmar's military junta to stop persecution of minority and opposition groups, killing the measure in the UN Security Council.

The vote was 9-3 in favour of the resolution, with three abstentions. But two of the negative votes came from permanent members with veto rights.

Both Russia and China, which had not cast a double veto since 1972, made the point the United States needed to listen to their complaints carefully. They argued that human rights violations were not the purview of the Security Council unless they endangered regional or international peace and security, which Myanmar did not.

"I hope some of our partners

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Hectic lobbying to get lucrative shipping jobs

RAFIQ HASAN

Strong lobbying continues for the lucrative posts of chief engineer and ship surveyors at the office of the director general of shipping as the current Chief Engineer Commander Monirul Islam is going for retirement on January 16.

The chief engineer is responsible for supervising issuance of survey certificates against around 8,500 vessels plying various domestic routes in the country. He also looks after the test and examination related issues of ship drivers and engineers.

There are allegations that the chief engineer and surveyors under him give certificate without surveying the vessels properly in exchange of bribe while plying of

faulty passenger launches often causes disasters.

The surveyors allegedly take Tk 3,000 to 5,000 for issuing an annual survey certificate for a vessel plying the domestic route while they take Tk 20,000 to 25,000 for giving approval for a vessel to cross the Bay, sources said.

The number of accidents in the Bay of Bengal increased recently as the unfit vessels often cross the sea and go to Chittagong through obtaining certificates from a surveyor.

The Chittagong port magistrate arrested a number of such vessels and informed the director of shipping about the matter on several occasions, said the sources.

But the launch owners have continued operating faulty vessels through maintaining 'good relations'

with the chief engineer and surveyors while the government's initiatives to stop plying of faulty passenger vessels failed on several occasions due to a nexus between launch owners and ship surveyors.

In last two decades, major ferry disasters claimed around 5,000 people in the country.

The government is considering appointment of a navy officer as the new chief engineer but hectic lobbying is going on to influence the high-ups for appointing a chief engineer from the existing six ship surveyors.

Sources said the ship surveyors are lobbying with the government high-ups and offering handsome amount as bribe for getting appointment as chief engineer and ship surveyor.

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Excavation starts in Narsingdi in search of ancient civilisation

BISHAWJIT DAS, back from Narsingdi

Archaeologists yesterday started the excavation work of the Wari-Bateshwar in Narsingdi, hopeful of unearthing nearly 2,500-year-old structures revealing substantial information about the civilisation that once flourished there.

Former chief adviser to the caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman officially inaugurated the digging at the site under Belabo upazila, some 70-km off the capital.

The excavating team of Jahangirnagar University (JU), led by Prof Sufi Mostafizur Rahman, has so far dug out a 'highway' inside a fortified town.

One of the significant discoveries during the excavation, the 180-metre long, six-metre wide and

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Former adviser to caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman accompanied by archaeologists inaugurates excavation of relics dating back to more than 2,500 years at Wari-Bateshwar in Narsingdi yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Correction

The story "Khaleda, Huda, Altaf yet to submit tax papers" published in the January 12 issue of The Daily Star carried an inadvertent mistake. The report mentioned that Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman had not submitted his "statement papers of wealth, income and tax return". But, in fact, he had submitted those papers. We regret the error.

BARAPUKURIA POWER PLANT

Coal shortage forces PDB to go for outsourcing

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

One of the two units of the country's first coal-based power plant at Barapukuria remains out of operation due to coal shortage as production at Barapukuria coal mine was suspended more than seven months ago.

Coal extraction was suspended in June last year to shift equipment for another 'phase development', mine officials said.

According to mining experts, at least 3-4 months are required for phase development, which expired in October last year.

A coal stock to run the plant for three months was kept when production at the mine was suspended.

Considering the long delay, Power Development Board (PDB) has floated tender for coal supply to maintain smooth power generation during the current IRRI-Boro

season.

The power plant is now operating the first 125 MW unit and producing power using reserve coal, plant sources said.

The plant now has a stock of at least 30,000 tonnes of coal while it requires 2,500 tonnes a day.

Earlier, the plant authorities had informed Petrobangla that its operation might stop due to shortage of coal.

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All quiet on EC front

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The acting chief election commissioner, three other election commissioners, the EC secretary and top election officials did not come to the Election Commission (EC) office yesterday.

The EC had earlier cancelled leave for all its officials but it stopped the election-related activities following the declaration of emergency by President Iajuddin Ahmed on Thursday night.

The EC, however, is yet to officially declare the postponement of the election scheduled for January 22.

The main entrance of the EC office was found closed at 3:00pm yesterday while no security guard or police was seen there.

The election materials including different gazettes were scattered on the EC premises.

A few mid-level EC officials who came to the office declined to make any comment about the absence of top EC officials.



Empty corridors of the Election Commission office in the capital yesterday as it postponed all activities relating to the January 22 parliamentary polls.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

4 of a family killed in blast in C'nawabganj

20 bombs recovered in Kushtia

STAR REPORT

A woman and her three daughters were killed when a powerful bomb went off in their house at a slum in Chapainawabganj town yesterday leaving a Bangladeshi cattle trader wounded by bullet.

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