

MARCH 7 SPEECH JS thanks Unesco for recognition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The House last night unanimously adopted a resolution aimed at giving thanks to the Unesco for recognising the historic March 7 speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as a world documentary heritage.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed placed the resolution, which was adopted by voice votes at the Jatiya Sangsad.

"We along with the whole nation are proud of Unesco's recognition of the historic March 7 speech of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as a world documentary heritage and inclusion of it in the Memory of the World International Register. The Jatiya Sangsad, therefore, gives thanks to Unesco and everyone concerned," reads the resolution.

Fifty-eight lawmakers took part in the five-and-a-half-hour-long discussion.

"One Bangalee [Bangabandhu] had delivered the March 7 speech. Now the speech is adorned across the world. It has been translated in 12 languages. It gives strength to realise rights of oppressed people," Prime

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Let him return to his daughter

Pleads Mubashar's ex-wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A week into Mubashar Hasan Cesar, an assistant professor at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in North South University, going missing, law enforcement agencies are yet to have any answers.

In a state of helplessness, Mubashar's ex-wife pleaded for Mubashar's return for the sake of his six-year old daughter in a letter sent to his sister.

Tamanna Tasmin, Mubashar's sister, shared a status on her Facebook yesterday quoting the letter. Tamanna prefaced the post by mentioning that she has always maintained good relations with Mubashar's ex-wife and was posting the letter on her behalf.

"Since November 7, a lot has been written about Mubashar and human-chains have been held. His friends want him back; they want trial of those involved in the abduction. I don't want their punishment or a trial. I only want my little daughter's father to return to her," the status read.

"We have a daughter. I told my daughter that her father has gone abroad to study... however, she was hurt because he had never gone anywhere without telling her."

"My daughter knows he will take her out on Friday to buy toys. But she cannot accept that he has 'gone abroad' without telling her," the status said.

The letter quoted further read, "Our daughter believes her father will bring many toys for her from abroad. Her birthday is in November. Her father gives a birthday party for her and I give another. She asks, 'I will

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Rohingya refugees wait for food aid at Thankhali refugee camp in Ukhia of Cox's Bazar yesterday. More than 600,000 Rohingyas have arrived in Bangladesh since a military crackdown in Myanmar in August triggering an exodus.

PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar army investigation a 'whitewash'

FROM PAGE 16

Myanmar's military has consistently claimed its innocence, and on Monday it posted the findings of an internal investigation on the Facebook page of its commander in chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

It said it had found no instances where its soldiers had shot and killed Rohingya villagers, raped women or tortured prisoners. It denied that security forces had torched Rohingya villages or used "excessive force".

Al, on the other hand, said with more than 600,000 women, men and children having fled Rakhine State in recent months fearing for their lives, there is overwhelming evidence that the military has murdered and raped Rohingya and burned their villages to the ground.

"After recording countless stories of horror and using satellite analysis to track the growing devastation we can only reach one conclusion: these attacks amount to crimes against humanity," James Gomez said.

"The Myanmar military has made clear it has no intention of ensuring accountability; it's now up to the international community to step up to ensure these appalling abuses do not go unpunished. The full extent of the violations against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities will not be known until the UN Fact-Finding Mission and other independent observers are given unfettered access to Myanmar, and in particular Rakhine State," he said.

Meanwhile, on Friday, the commanding officer in Rakhine State, Major General Maung Maung Soe was replaced. No reason for his transfer was given, but a senior offi-

cer with the military's media department told Reuters, Maung Maung Soe had no new assignment, and had been placed on a reserve list, Reuters reports.

A spokeswoman for the US State Department, Katina Adams, said the United States was aware of reports of the general's replacement.

"We remain gravely concerned by continuing reports of violence and human rights abuses committed by Burmese security forces and vigilantes. Those responsible for abuses must be held accountable," Adams said.

INTERNAL PROBE

According to Reuters, the Myanmar military's internal probe said that according to 2,817 people interviewed from 54 Rohingya villages, the soldiers did not fire on "innocent villagers", rape or commit sexual violence against women.

Nor were there any killings or beating of villagers, and the security forces did not carry out any looting or set fire to Rohingya mosques, it said.

The report also concluded that security forces only used light arms in clashes with Rohingya militants and there were no findings to suggest the use of "excessive force".

It also blamed the militants for setting fire to the villages and frightening and coercing people to leave their homes.

Suu Kyi has said that any alleged atrocities should be substantiated and investigated, while her government is working to stabilise Rakhine in order for the Rohingyas to return.

Myanmar, however, is refusing entry to a UN panel that was tasked with investigating allegations of abuses after a smaller military counter-offensive launched in October 2016.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

to visit Myanmar today

The military's self-exoneration came as US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson prepared to visit Myanmar today for talks with leaders.

Both Tillerson and Aung San Suu Kyi, the head of a less than two-year-old civilian administration that has no control over the military, are attending a regional summit in Manila.

With US senators back in Washington pressing to impose economic sanctions and travel restrictions targeting the military and its business interests, Tillerson is expected to deliver a stern message to Myanmar's generals, while supporting the transition to democracy.

Suu Kyi discussed the Rohingya crisis with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the Southeast Asian leaders' summit in Manila.

"The secretary-general highlighted that strengthened efforts to ensure humanitarian access, safe, dignified, voluntary and sustained returns, as well as true reconciliation between communities, would be essential," a UN representative said in brief note on the meeting.

MAY CALLS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

British Prime Minister Theresa May said in foreign policy address on Monday that Myanmar's military should be called to account.

"This is a major humanitarian crisis which looks like ethnic cleansing," she said in a speech delivered at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in the City of London.

"And it is something for which the Burmese authorities - and especially the military - must take full responsibility."

As new accounts emerged of atrocities in Rakhine state, where government forces claim to be tar-

geting "terrorists," Downing Street called on Myanmar's government to permit access for aid agencies, reports CNN.

UN CHIEF VOICES CONCERN

Addressing the ninth Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)-United Nations Summit in Manila on Monday, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres voiced deep concern over the displacement of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Myanmar to Bangladesh.

"I cannot hide my deep concern with the dramatic movement of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Myanmar to Bangladesh. It is a worrying escalation in a protracted tragedy and a potential source of instability in the region, and radicalisation," he said.

Since the beginning of the crisis, and beyond the end of violence, the UN chief reiterated his call for unhindered humanitarian access to affected communities; and the right to safe, voluntary and dignified return of those who fled, to their places of origin.

The United Nations welcomes constructive approaches by ASEAN, including the provision of humanitarian aid to northern Rakhine.

Speaking in Dhaka on Sunday, Pramila Patten, the UN special representative of the secretary-general on sexual violence in conflict, said she would raise accusations against the Myanmar military with the International Criminal Court in Hague.

"Sexual violence is being commanded, orchestrated and perpetrated by the armed forces of Myanmar," she said following a three-day tour of the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

SK Sinha's resignation accepted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Abdul Hamid accepted the resignation of Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha on Monday evening.

The Bangabhaban yesterday forwarded the relevant file to the law ministry for the next course of action, the president's Press Secretary Md Joynal Abedin told The Daily Star.

He said the resignation was effective from November 10, the day the letter was signed. It reached Bangabhaban, the official residence of the president, through the Bangladesh High Commission in Singapore, he added.

Joynal could not say anything about the reason Justice Sinha mentioned in the letter for his decision to step down or whether the president has taken any initiative to appoint a new chief justice.

Contacted, Law Secretary ASSM Zahirul Haque Dulal told this correspondent that the file regarding the resignation reached his office.

Asked, he could not immediately say what would be the next course of action as he was out of the office yesterday.

On Saturday, the minister told this correspondent that Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, the senior most judge of the Appellate Division after Justice Sinha, would continue to carry out the responsibility of the chief justice, under Article 97 of the constitution

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Police seek to sue Farhad Mazhar

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detectives yesterday asked for permission to sue Farhad Mazhar and his wife Farida Akter on charges of faking the writer's abduction and giving false statements to a court and police.

They also submitted the final report in the case Farida Akter filed with Adabor Police Station over the alleged abduction of the writer and poet.

The probe found that the abduction was a drama staged by Farhad in an attempt to get money from his family members.

Inspector of Detective Branch of police Mahbubul Haque, who investigated the case, submitted the report before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate in Dhaka yesterday.

Metropolitan Magistrate Khurshid Alam will decide on December 7 whether legal action will be taken against the couple.

The statement given by Farhad Mazhar and his wife Farida Akter to magistrates and police was false and fabricated, said the investigation report.

The couple should be sued for their misleading and false statement, said the investigation officer Mahbubul Haque.

According to Farhad's account of the event, he woke up early in the morning on July 3 and went out of his Adabor flat around 5:00am to buy some medication for his eye problems from a drug store in front of Suhrawardy Hospital, the officers said.

The writer also claimed that several unidentified men forced him into a microbus when he reached near Shyamoli intersection and blindfolded him.

He was kept on the footwell between two rows of seats on the microbus and

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Dhaka seeks to speed up deals

FROM PAGE 1

The list of 12 also includes some infrastructure development projects that involve construction of Dhaka-Ashulia elevated expressway, coastal protection work and construction of marine drive expressway from Chittagong's Sitakunda to Cox's Bazar, and expansion and modernisation of Mongla Port facilities.

The China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation will build the 24-km elevated expressway from Dhaka airport to Ashulia as an extension of the under-construction 26-km Dhaka Elevated Expressway connecting the airport to the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Shanir Akhra.

The new component of the expressway has already got the nod from both the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) and the cabinet purchase body.

One of the projects involves the much-needed balancing, modernisation, rehabilitation and expansion (BMRE) of public sector jute mills.

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) officials say once the BMRE is completed, many of the age-old state-run jute mills would become more productive.

There is also a "digital connectivity" project involving \$1 billion. Its main objective is to connect 2,250 unions with the upazilas concerned

through optical fibre cables and set up business process outsourcing (BPO) centres.

The other projects include: Rajshahi Wasa surface water treatment plant, reduction of system loss under Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC), extension of the existing underground mining operation of Barapukuria Coal Mine and establishment of six TV stations of Bangladesh Television (BTV).

EIGHT ONGOING PROJECTS

Bangladesh and China are now at the final stage of signing loan agreements involving over \$3 billion for the Padma Bridge Rail Link project, modernisation of telecommunication network for "digital connectivity", China Economic and Industrial Zone in Chittagong, and installation of a single point mooring (SPM) with double pipelines.

Under the SPM project, crude and finished petroleum products will directly be taken to the Eastern Refinery in Chittagong's Patenga from deep sea through two pipelines. Currently, the petroleum products are unloaded from big ships and taken to the port in small ships. It is then taken to the refinery by oil tankers.

A loan deal has already been signed for "Development of National ICT Infra-Network for Bangladesh Government Phase-iii" (Info-Sarker) project.

Besides, negotiations are underway over loan mechanism (commercial or/and soft loan) for two other projects: Expansion and Strengthening of Power System Network under the DPDC, and Power Grid Network Strengthening Project under Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB).

Apart from these, a commercial contract has been signed for Dhaka-Sylhet Four-lane Highway Project.

On the perception that the China-funded projects are moving slowly, Chinese Ambassador Ma Mingqiang recently said the decision-making process is time-consuming.

"It is not that we can say something today and do it overnight," he said, adding that there are many layers of evaluation and administrative team work.

Sometimes bureaucracy does not help matters either, he said, citing the release of a Chinese shipment from the Chittagong port that took 11 months as a case in point.

"These slow down the pace of projects," he said, adding that both the Chinese and Bangladesh sides are working hard to speed up the implementation of the projects.

Speaking at the signing of the framework agreement on SPM project on October 29, Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Kazi Shofiqul Azam acknowledged that the implementation of the projects has not been smooth.

The Azzurri have fallen

FROM PAGE 1

The AS Roma legend was only pleading for the coaching staff to bring on strikers, especially someone like Lorenzo Insigne, as Italy desperately needed a goal to stay in the World Cup reckoning. Insigne, despite a reputation as Italy's most gifted forward of this generation and demands from all quarters for his place in the line-up, was never to be seen on the pitch that night.

Whether the Napoli forward would have made a difference to what is now Italy's shambolic play-off defeat, we will never know. But him not being in the starting eleven or at least coming on for a change, speaks volumes about the broader malaise that plagues Italian football: that of a dearth of local talent and a system which desperately clings to personnel who belong in a bygone era rather than those who try to evolve with the game and at times revolutionise it.

While this epic failure comes only 11 years after Italy's glorious triumph in Berlin, the signs of the apocalypse were all there in their first-round exits in the last two World Cups. Since that triumph, the Azzurri have won one World Cup finals game. So it did not happen in a day; the process was certainly exacerbated by a system that has been intrinsically doomed, with all the wrong people leading the lines.

The list starts with coach Gian Piero Ventura himself.

The 69-year-old, whose only success at the top level was to take Torino from Serie B in 2011 to the Europa League round of

16 in 2015, was given the Italy job in the wake of Euro 2016. However, he was someone who had never managed one of Serie A's big hitters and had only the 1996 Serie C title in his trophy cabinet. Critics suggested that a team that has four World Cups to its name needed someone with a bigger reputation and it is needless to mention that Italy has been the breeding ground of the most successful coaches in European football for decades.

However, it would be unfair to lay all the blame on one person. Ventura was hired by the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) president Carlo Tavecchio. The 74-year-old Tavecchio is a symbol of a gerontocratic Italy where age is often valued more than youth. He hired Ventura and Ventura stuck with the old guard, largely disregarding the youth.

The most telling reason of all, perhaps, is the dearth of talent. There is a strong view that Ventura inherited Italy's weakest group of players for decades. To put things in perspective, the last time Italy qualified through a play-off in 1998, the forwards they took to France were Roberto Baggio, Alessandro Del Piero, Christian Vieri, Filippo Inzaghi and Enrico Chiesa while leaving top-class attackers like Gianfranco Zola, Roberto Mancini, Francesco Totti, Giuseppe Signori, Vincenzo Montella and Pierluigi Casiraghi at home.

20 years later and the squad's frontline contains an Inter reserve in Eder and a struggling Southampton striker, Manolo Gabbiadini. Such is the dearth of quality

that Italy's constant fixture up front is Ciro Immobile, someone who is known to have been under-par while playing for his country.

So it seems there needs to be a complete overhaul of the system that Italian football is running on now, because if things continue in this vein, more World Cups may come and go without the vaunted Azzurri and a World Cup without the Azzurri is something no neutral fan of football would want to see.

Tank convoy seen outside Harare

AFP, Harare

Several tanks were seen moving on the outskirts of the Zimbabwean capital Harare Tuesday, witnesses told AFP, a day after the army warned it could intervene over a purge of ruling party officials.

"I saw a long convoy of military vehicles, including tanks, about an hour ago. I don't know where they were heading," a female fruit seller near Westgate shopping centre, about 10 kilometres (six miles) from central Harare, told AFP.

A second female by-stander at the shopping centre also told the AFP reporter that she had seen the convoy.

The reason for the military presence was not immediately clear, but the vehicles may have been on routine manoeuvres.

The military spokesman was not available to comment.