

Impose global arms embargo on Myanmar military

Rights group urges UN Security Council to pass resolution

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Human rights group Fortify Rights has called for the UN Security Council to urgently convene an open session and pass a binding resolution, imposing a global arms embargo on the Myanmar military.

The Security Council should also refer the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court, and impose targeted sanctions, it said.

The call came a day before US President Joe Biden hosts Southeast Asian leaders at the White House Thursday and weeks after the US determined the Myanmar military violence against the Rohingyas as genocide.

“The Security Council has a responsibility to act. The flow of arms and money to the junta must be stopped, and the Security Council is the key international body with a mandate to make that happen,” said Fortify Rights CEO Matthew Smith yesterday.

In April 2021, ASEAN leaders reached a “Five-Point Consensus” with the Myanmar military, aimed at putting the nation back on a path to peace following the February 2021 military coup d’état led by Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

The Myanmar junta has flouted the agreement while committing mass atrocity crimes, Fortify Right said.

The UK is the UN Security Council’s “penholder” on Myanmar and should table a Chapter VII resolution mandating an arms embargo and referral to the ICC, and President Biden should use the occasion of the Special Summit to obtain ASEAN’s support for such a move, Fortify Rights said.

Since launching a coup d’état on February 1, 2021, the Myanmar army and police have reportedly killed more than 1,800 people and detained more than 13,640, said the rights group.



BNP leaders and activists at a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club demonstrate against the recent attacks on homes of BNP activists in different districts and the rising prices of soybean oil and other essentials.

PHOTO: STAR

No overseas trip for govt officials

Finance ministry issues circular citing current global crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has ordered to stop overseas trips of government officials in the wake of the post-Covid economic recovery and the current global crisis.

The finance ministry in a circular yesterday said all exposure visits/study tours/travels for APA, innovations, workshops or seminars will remain suspended until further notice.

The order will be applicable for the revenue and development budget and will be effective immediately, said the circular signed by Mohammad Shawkat Ullah, deputy secretary of the ministry.

The government made the decision when it saw that too many officials of different ministries and departments were keen on making trips abroad. Economists and watchdogs say that many of these overseas tours are fruitless, unnecessary and a waste of public money.

Government officials and, in some cases, cabinet members of different ministries and projects make foreign trips

on taxpayers’ money every year to take part in trainings, meetings, and seminars.

At least 100 agriculture ministry officials will participate, in phases, in a six-month international horticulture exhibition in the Netherlands, even though

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the government had asked to abandon all routine tours, except those involving emergencies.

The fair, which kicked off on April 13, will continue until October 9 in the Dutch city of Almere.

A 44-member delegation, including the daughter and son-in-law of Begum Monnujan Sufian, state minister for labour

and employment, and the spouse of BEPZA executive chairman, are set to visit Switzerland for the 110th session of the International Labour Conference.

It will take place between May 27 and June 11.

A government order, however, said that all expenses of the delegates, other than government officials and ministers, will be borne by themselves.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan led an eight-member delegation, including his and the ministry secretary’s spouses, on to a trip to the UK, Germany, Spain and France between November 23 and December 5.

The spouses bore their own expenses, officials said.

The government in July last year withheld 50 percent of this fiscal year’s allocation for foreign trips and asked officials to cancel the routine tours, as part of safety measures during the pandemic.

From March 2020 to July 2021, Tk 2,500 crore allocated for the foreign tours of government officials was saved.

162 return home from strife-torn Libya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of 162 Bangladeshis returned home from war-torn Libya yesterday under a voluntary repatriation programme coordinated by the Bangladesh government and International Organisation for Migration.

A chartered flight carrying them touched down at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the morning, said an IOM official in Dhaka.

Among the returnees could be trafficking victims and migrants who failed to cross the Mediterranean into Europe illegally. Seven of them were physically ill, the official told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

On March 3, another group of 114 Bangladeshis returned home from Libya, known as a transit country to Europe for illegal migration.

18 Rohingyas detained

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police detained 18 Rohingyas, including 10 children, in Moulvibazar town yesterday after they had entered the country from India illegally.

The Rohingyas were detained from the Dhaka bus stand area around 11:00am, said Yeasinul Haque, officer-in-charge of Moulvibazar Sadar Police Station.

Their identities could not be confirmed till filing of this report last night.

Quoting Rohingyas, the OC said they entered Bangladesh through Kulaura border and were heading towards a Cox’s Bazar Rohingya camp.

Charges pressed against deep tube-well operator over two farmers’ death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police have pressed charges against Sakhawat Hossain, operator of a deep tube-well of the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority, in two cases for provoking two Rajshahi Santal farmers to die by suicide.

The charge sheets were submitted to a local court last month, said Sub-Inspector Mahfuzur Rahman of Godagari Police Station, investigating officer of the cases.

On March 23, Santal farmers Abhinath Mardi and Robi Mardi of Nimghutu village in Godagari upazila drank pesticides, as Sakhawat refused to supply water to their paddy fields.

Abhinath died at his house the following night while Robi breathed his last at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital on March 25.

Ex-UPDF man shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A former activist of the United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) was shot dead by unidentified criminals at his home in Shilchhori area of Rangamati’s Barkal upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was Lakshmi Chandra Chakma, 45. He quit the UPDF a few years ago, said Joshim Uddin, OC of Barkal Police Station.

Locals said a group of four-five unidentified armed criminals entered Lakshmi Chandra’s home around 2:00am yesterday and shot him dead.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Rangamati General Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Hajj fees hiked by Tk 1.09 lakh

FROM PAGE 1

M Shahadat Hossain Taslim said the agencies will be able to announce their own separate “special hajj packages”, but the amount of those will not be below the minimum rate of a package.

The religious affairs ministry yesterday proposed Tk 4,56,530 as the minimum rate under private hajj management.

However, the minimum rate declared by the HAAB is around Tk 7,000 higher.

Besides, Taslim said every pilgrim would have to pay an additional Tk 19,683 for a “Qurbani (sacrificing animals) coupon” from the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia.

According to the bilateral agreement between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia, 57,585 Bangladeshis will be able to perform this year’s hajj, likely to be held on July 8 depending on sighting of the moon.

Of the pilgrims, 4,000 will perform hajj under government management and the rest under private agencies, he also said.

Hajj is a ritual for able-bodied Muslims, to be performed at least once in their lifetime.

In 2019, around 1.27 lakh Bangladeshis were allowed to perform hajj. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the largest annual Muslim congregation was held on

a limited scale the past two years.

The HAAB president said accommodation will be provided for the hajjis under the general hajj package. It would be around 1.5km from outer courtyard of the Holy Haram Sharif.

He added they have announced the general package after calculating the airfare, house rent in Saudi Arabia, service charges, Muallem fees, Zamzam water, food costs and other expenses.

Asked, the HAAB chief said the reason for the hike was due to the exchange rate of the Saudi Riyal, 15 percent VAT on all services, service charges, and taxes imposed by the Saudi authorities.

Meanwhile, the government on Wednesday announced the minimum rate of hajj package at Tk 4,62,150 under government management, which is around Tk 1 lakh higher than in 2020.

Another package (package-I), also under the government management, had its minimum rate fixed at Tk 5,27,340 – Tk 1,02,340 higher than that in 2020.

According to the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, pilgrims must be under the age of 65 and must be fully vaccinated against Covid-19. The negative certificate of PCR test will be required within 72 hours of departure.

JSD man hacked to death in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Criminals hacked to death a Jubo Jote leader, the youth wing of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, in Kushtia’s Daulatpur upazila on Wednesday night.

Two Jubo Jote activists were also injured.

The deceased was Mahbub Khan Salam, 37, general secretary of Daulatpur unit. Jubo Jote. The injured are Mamun Joarder and Harun.

Quoting one of the injured, Jabid Hasan, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, said some 15 to 20 criminals attacked the three with sharp weapons near Salam’s house in Allardorga Bazar around 11:00pm.

Injured Mamun said Salam was sitting near his house with him and Harun. Suddenly, the criminals swooped on them and started hacking them indiscriminately, he added.

Mamun alleged that a group of activists of local Jubo League, youth front of ruling Awami League, launched the attack.

He also alleged that Tokon Choudhury, president of Daulatpur upazila Jubo League, led the group.

This correspondent could not contact Tokon, also the younger brother of former AL lawmaker from Kushtia-1 Rezaul Haque Chowdhury, for comments.

Locals rushed the injured to Daulatpur Upazila Health Complex. They were later shifted to Kushtia General Hospital for better treatment, where Salam died at 12:00pm, said OC Jabid, adding that police visited the spot and collected evidence.

He said there was ongoing tension between the activists of Jatiya Jubo Jote and Jubo League over a murder. It is being investigated whether the killing of Salam was political, the OC added.

Rokonuzzaman, central president of Jatiya Jubo Jote, and its General Secretary Shafiqul Kabir Swapan demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka gets new PM

FROM PAGE 1

Security forces patrolling in armoured personnel carriers with orders to shoot looters on sight have largely restored order.

A curfew was lifted yesterday morning – only to be reimposed after a six-hour break allowing Sri Lanka’s 22 million people to stock up on essentials.

Sri Lankans have suffered months of severe shortages

of food, fuel and medicines – as well as long power cuts – after the country burnt through foreign currency reserves needed to pay for vital imports.

The central bank chief warned Wednesday that the economy would “collapse beyond redemption” unless a new government was urgently appointed.

Wickremesinghe, 73, is seen as a pro-West free-

market reformist, potentially making bailout negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and others smoother.

He had already been working closely with Rajapaksa before his appointment, to shake up the finance ministry and the central bank with sweeping policy changes, an official close to their discussions told AFP.

With many from Rajapaksa’s party having defected in recent months, no group in the 225-member assembly has an absolute majority, making parliamentary approval of the unity government’s legislation potentially tricky.

It also remains to be seen whether a new cabinet will be enough to calm public anger if Rajapaksa continues to resist calls for

his resignation.

“What he has done is despicable, he has brought all of us to this state of hunger and poverty,” Abu Nawaz, a small business owner in Colombo, told AFP. “What is the point of keeping him as the president?” he added. “Will this end our miseries?”

The central bank almost doubled key interest rates and announced a default

on Sri Lanka’s \$51-billion external debt as part of the policy shift, officials said.

The main opposition SJB party was initially invited to lead a new government, but its leader Sajith Premadasa insisted the president first step down.

In recent days the party has split, with a dozen SJB lawmakers pledging support to Wickremesinghe.