

‘No one should provoke conflict in Myanmar’

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two years after the military coup in Myanmar and more than five years after the latest Rohingya exodus to Bangladesh, the scope of restoring normalcy and repatriation of the Rohingyas remain as elusive as ever.

While Myanmar's military junta has been continuing persecution, extrajudicial killings and gross human-rights violations, confrontation of the global superpowers and regional powers has further complicated the situation for Bangladesh.

These concerns were expressed yesterday at the seminar titled “Restoring Peace in Myanmar: Two Years after the Military Coup” organised by the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) of the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG), North South University.

Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain said, “The Rohingya crisis is already creating internal security threats. Bangladesh could become a hotspot in the future if the situation turns into a regional conflict involving India, China and the USA.”

“If Bangladesh wants to solve the Rohingya crisis, I think there are other options that we need to explore. Our diplomacy did not work in this regard, and it is not going to work in the next five years,” he added.

Commenting on the Burma Act, recently passed by the US Senate, former foreign secretary and ambassador Shahidul Haque said, “The Burma Act is primarily an attempt to build a crisis in an already existing conflict in

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Locals and students of different schools in Dhanmondi formed a human chain on Satmasjid Road yesterday to protest indiscriminate tree felling on roadside islands there. Recently, Dhaka South City Corporation started renovating the road dividers, and in the process, have damaged or uprooted the trees.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Mexican foreign minister due Mar 7-9

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday welcomed the proposed visit of a high-level delegation led by Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon from March 7-9 and expressed hope that his maiden visit would infuse vigour and vitality in the bilateral relations.

Momen, at a meeting with foreign diplomats, also welcomed the announcement of the Mexican government to open their embassy in Dhaka by the end of 2023, which will further consolidate ties between the two countries and boost trade and commerce, investment, exchange of visits between businesspeople and high officials, and people-to-people contact.

Federico Salas Lofte, non-resident ambassador of Mexico; Alejandro

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Two bodies formed to find mistakes in textbooks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry yesterday formed two probe committees to identify mistakes in textbooks and ascertain whether the errors were the result of any negligence by officials.

Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research (IER) Director Prof Abdul Halim will lead the seven-member probe committee to find out mistakes, read an office order of Secondary and Higher Education Division yesterday.

This committee has been asked to submit its report within one month.

Meanwhile, a separate committee was formed to investigate negligence of the officials.

The committee will be headed by Khaleida Akhter, additional secretary of the education division. This committee, comprising

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Biman promotes 58 pilots

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has promoted 58 pilots. The decision came amid the shortage of pilots in the airline, as Biman's fleet of 21 aircraft were not being used optimally, according to top officials of the organisation.

Besides, the current Biman administration has decided to create a pipeline of cadet pilots through regular recruitments.

Of the 21 aircraft, six are state-of-the-art Boeing 787 Dreamliners, four Boeing 777s, six 737s and five Dash-8s.

Biman Managing Director and CEO Shafiul Azim told The Daily Star that there are 159 pilots in Biman at present to operate these planes.

The national flag carrier needs at least 48 more pilots, he said.

Shafiul mentioned that many of the 58 pilots have been promoted: 10 to the rank of first officer of B737 from first officer of Dash 8Q 400, 17 to first officer of B777/B787 from first officer of B737, 13 to captain of B737/Dash 8, 14 to captain of B-787/B-777 from captain of B-737, two first officers of B787s to captains of Dash-8, and two to captain of B-737 from captain of Dash-8.

Those promoted will get permanent confirmation after a six-month training period, based on their performance report by the authorities.

“From now on, we will follow regular recruitment, promotion, posting and actions against the wrongdoers for the smooth operation of all departments of Biman,” said the Biman CEO.

“We have a huge demand from passengers on the Toronto route. We will not be able to restore the much-awaited Dhaka-New York route if we don't address the pilot shortage,” he added.

To resolve the shortage immediately, the Biman MD said they have also recruited four foreign pilots.

“Apart from promotion and recruitment of pilots,

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‘Laws must be pro-people’

Speakers tell conference on battling fake news

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Laws to combat fake news must be pro-people, otherwise, they will be misused against those who are vulnerable and protect those who are powerful, said speakers at a conference yesterday.

Former head of National Human Rights Commission Prof Mizanur Rahman said fake news became a tool for achieving political gains, as observed in both local and geopolitical contexts. “Fake news spreads more ahead of the national election,” he warned.

The event was organised by ELCOP (Empowerment through Law of the Common People).

Rahman, who chairs ELCOP, was speaking at a seminar titled “Fake News: A Threat to Human Rights and Democracy” at a city hotel.

“During elections, when the flurry of messages increases, there is always a feat of greater violence,” said senior journalist Saleem Samad.

He said the Digital Security Act is directly in conflict with democracy, freedom of expression and pluralism, but has left the fundamentalists unscathed. They are one of the key groups that have been spreading misinformation on Covid-19 and spewing hate speech.

Strategies to combat fake news, misinformation and hate speech should be more social and educational in their character to ensure that the right to freedom of expression is not violated by over-broad legislative provisions criminalising or suppressing

expression, said Samad.

Human rights advocate ZI Khan Panna said unless existing laws are changed, fake news cannot be combatted.

Md Johir Uddin Shohag, research consultant at ELCOP, pointed out that the rise of the influence of tech companies and populism helps fake news spread faster.

Eminent economist Prof Abul Barkat said to combat fake news, formal legal measures, corporate commitments, and civil-society actions are needed.

“During elections, when the flurry of messages increases, there is always a feat of greater violence.”

Saleem Samad, senior journalist

Prof Intiaz Ahmed of Dhaka University's international relations department said the rise of fake news cannot be tackled without ensuring digital literacy for the masses.

Dr Arghya Sengupta, research director of Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy; Dr Lopamudra Maitra Bajpai, professor at West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences; Prof Yubaraj Sangroula, former attorney general from Nepal; and Vasily Pushkov, director of International Cooperation, Sputnik International News Agency and Radio from Russia, also spoke at the event.

No specific threats centring Boi Mela Says DMP commissioner; fair starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruk yesterday said there is no specific security threat centring Amar Ekushey Book Fair.

“But if any writer or publisher worries about their security or feels threatened, we will keep watch,” he said while inspecting security measures at the fair venue.

“Some untoward incidents took place in the past. We have taken three-tier security measures so that no such incident can take place this year,” he added.

The DMP chief said they have extended the areas, apart from the fair venue, under CCTV coverage.

Visitors have to go through archways to enter

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BNP marches from Gabtoli to Mirpur

UNB, Dhaka

Leaders and activists of BNP's Dhaka north city unit marched towards the capital's Mirpur from Gabtoli yesterday, to press home their 10-point demand, including holding the next general election under a non-party caretaker government.

BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain formally inaugurated the programme at Gabtoli's SA Khaleque Paribahan Maidan around 3:20pm.

This was the third such programme of BNP, as the party's Dhaka north city unit marched from Badda to Malibagh on Saturday and the Dhaka south city unit marched from Jatrabari to Jurain on Monday.

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PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 1

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:15	5:52	7:15
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:30	5:56	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

DTG

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15-18 FEB. 2023

ICCB International Convention City Bashundhara 12:00 - 20:00

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- Garment Machinery & Accessories
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- Auxiliary
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