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News Brief

President Md. Abdul Hamid has urged all to stay alert so that nobody can create confusion among people through misinterpretation of religions. He made the urge while addressing a function during his visit to Gulshan-Banani Puja Mandop in Dhaka on the occasion of Durja Puja.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who underwent a successful gallbladder surgery in the US capital of Washington, is now doing well and cleared seven urgent files online on Thursday.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged Myanmar's authorities on Thursday to immediately end military operations that have sent over 500,000 Rohingya Muslims fleeing to Bangladesh, calling the crisis 'the world's fastest developing refugee emergency and a humanitarian and human rights nightmare'. The UN chief warned that the humanitarian crisis is a breeding ground for radicalization, criminals and traffickers. And he said the broader crisis has generated multiple implications for neighboring states and the larger region, including the risk of inter-communal strife.

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley in her speech at the Security Council on Thursday called upon countries to suspend providing weapons to Myanmar over violence against Rohingya Muslims until the military puts sufficient accountability measures in place. It was the first time the United States called for punishment of military leaders behind the repression.

Members of Congress are sharpening their criticism of Myanmar's crackdown that has forced a half-million Rohingya Muslims to flee to Bangladesh. Republicans and Democrats said Thursday they want the Trump administration to consider sanctions against the perpetrators and to re-evaluate U.S. policy toward the Southeast Asian nation. Twenty-one senators said in a letter to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that Myanmar security forces responded to insurgent attacks with 'clearance operations' that have left hundreds dead and thousands of homes burned. The senators said that response has been 'extraordinarily disproportionate'.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) yesterday reiterated that Rohingya refugees have been fleeing violence in Myanmar at a staggering rate calling for stronger international protection and humanitarian assistance. As new arrivals top half a million in Bangladesh, the agency, in massive efforts, has started distributing plastic sheets and essential relief items to the refugees in Cox's Bazar. International Organisation for Migration, the UN Migration Agency and partner aid agencies are struggling to provide clean water and sanitation for Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar. UNICEF said it is planning to establish over 1,300 new learning centres for Rohingya children who are now staying in Cox's Bazar. Edouard Beigbeder, Unicef Representative in Bangladesh said this yesterday. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Government has requested international aid agencies to provide cholera vaccine to prevent outbreak of cholera among the half-a-million Rohingyas.

The first span of the Padma Bridge is going to be placed on pillars today. The project's Executive Engineer (Resettlement) Tofazzel Hossain said Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader will witness the work at Zajira end of the bridge in Shariatpur.

Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj are scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on separate bilateral visits in October. Jaitley is set to arrive on Tuesday on a two-day official visit at the invitation of his Bangladeshi counterpart AMA Muhith. Swaraj will arrive on October 22 for two days at the invitation of her counterpart AH Mahmood Ali. These are high-level visits after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to New Delhi in April this year.

United Arab Emirates has formulated a new labour law stipulating flexible working conditions for domestic workers. The new law has many protective provisions, including regular weekly dayoff, 30 days of annual leave with pay and the right to retain personal documents. The law was approved by UAE President Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan and it was announced on Tuesday.

Bangladeshi expatriates in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) would get relief while calling home largely as the Saudi government has lifted ban on calls made through online apps, also known as voice over internet protocol (VoIP). Voice and video calls through online applications including Skype, Whatsapp, Messenger and Viber have been made open from Thursday last week amid rapid growth of internet communications that was banned in KSA since 2013.

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