

APPOINTMENT OF CARETAKER CHIEF

28 killed, 2000 injured during movement

Says Odhikar report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 28 people died and more than 2000 received injuries during October 27 to 31 centring nationwide movement over the appointment of chief adviser to the caretaker government, says a report of human rights organisation Odhikar, compiled from newspaper statements.

The report also said that more than 2000 people were arrested by law enforcing agencies during the period.

Besides, in the last month a total of 77 people died, 3096 received injuries in different incidents of human rights violation, the report added.

Among the dead 13 people were killed by different law enforcing agencies, 15 by Rab and eight by police.

The report also said that last month 34 journalists were injured, one was arrested and 12 were issued life threat. Two newspaper offices were also ransacked during this period.

During the same period a total of 46 rape cases were reported. Among the victims 6 were killed after violation and one committed suicide.

Meanwhile, another report compiled by Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC) said that from January to October a total

of 275 people were killed by law enforcers while the number of political killing in the country totalled 155.

BHRC report also said that in the last ten months a total of 288 victims were raped, 88 fell victim to acid violence, 3 to fatwa, 93 were victims to trafficking and 37 died in custody.

Both Odhikar and BHRC expressed deep concern over the incidents of human rights violation and called upon law enforcing agencies and related government departments to be more responsible so that the percentage of these incidents may be brought down to zero level.

At least 200 loaded trucks remained stranded at the port during the deadlock.



PHOTO: STAR
Nari Sangram Committee stages a demonstration in front of Bangabhaban in the city yesterday demanding electoral reforms.

No 'real change' for Afghan women

BBC ONLINE

An international women's rights group says guarantees given to Afghan women after the fall of the Taliban in 2001 have not translated into real change.

Womankind Worldwide says millions of Afghan women and girls continue to face systematic discrimination and violence in their households and communities.

The report admits that there have been some legal, civil and constitutional gains for Afghan women.

But serious challenges remain and need to be addressed urgently, it states.

These include challenges to women's safety, realisation of civil and political rights and status.

Self-harming
Womankind Worldwide sent a film crew to Afghanistan to investigate the situation of women there.

They found a young Afghan woman crying in hospital who said she wanted to die. She was recovering after setting fire to herself.

Womankind Worldwide says there has been a dramatic rise in cases of self-immolation by Afghan women since 2003.

It believes many are the result of forced marriages, thought to account for about 60 percent to 80 percent of

all Afghan marriages.

57 percent of girls are married before the legal marriage age of 16.

Domestic violence remains widespread.

At an Afghan women's shelter, a young woman told the film crew that she came to the shelter to forget life's troubles.

"I come here so I can ease the pain a little. When I am at home sometimes I feel as though someone is choking me," she told the film crew.

Womankind Worldwide says the Afghan authorities rarely investigate women's complaints of violent attacks.



PHOTO: STAR
Jubo Sangram Parishad takes out a procession from Zero Point in the city yesterday protesting the killing of Jubo Moitree leader Russel Khan.

Export, import thru' Hili land port resume today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Import and export will resume through Hili land port today after four days of closure due to political unrest, Import and Export and C & F Agent Association sources said.

The national exchequer suffered a loss of Tk 3 crore following the unrest, sources added.

The port activities had been suspended on October 28 following series of clashes between BNP, JP and AL activists.

The district administration imposed section 144 in the port areas on October 30 as the situation was worsening, Hakimpur police said.

The decision to resume port activities was taken at a meeting between political parties and Import and Export and C & F Agent Association on Monday night, association General Secretary Shahin Hossain said.

At least 200 loaded trucks remained stranded at the port during the deadlock.

Nari Sangram submits memo to president

DU CORRESPONDENT

Nari Sangram Committee, a women's organisation, yesterday submitted a memorandum to President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed to press their 11-point demand.

Their demands include reorganisation of the Election Commission, update of the voter list, and cancellation of all political appointments, promotions and retirements in the administration since July 1.

The Committee led by its leaders Afroza Haq Rina, Hajera Sultana, Jolekha Haq Mridha, Nasrin Begum and others went to Bangabhaban and submitted the memorandum.

President's Assistant Personal Secretary Abdul Hawlader received the memorandum on behalf of the president.

Bangalore city renamed Bengaluru

REUTERS, Bangalore

India's technology hub of Bangalore changed its name to its vernacular original Bengaluru yesterday in what is seen as a bid to appease locals upset at the influx of outsiders.

The name change was announced to mark the 50th anniversary celebrations of the formation of Karnataka.

However, the change is expected to take about a month to come into effect legally as it needs central government approval, a senior state official said.

Historians say Bengaluru is derived from Bendakaluru, meaning a town of boiled beans, as the place was named when it was born in the 14th century.

Bangalore is the anglicised version of Bengaluru, a city which was popular with India's British colonial rulers for its temperate weather throughout the year.

Home to more than 1,500 computer software and back office firms - including global giants such as IBM, Dell, Intel, Google and Oracle - the city has seen an influx of outsiders drawn by lucrative employment opportunities.

Although it has traditionally been among India's more cosmopolitan centres, the increased migration over the last decade has alienated some locals and led to the resurgence of regional chauvinistic groups, analysts say.

Their campaign seeking primacy for the local Kannada language - which they say is threatened by the influx - has seen shops and businesses in Bangalore removing English signboards and instead prominently displaying Kannada signs.

Kannada activists and writers have also opposed a state government move to introduce teaching English in primary government schools across the state.



PHOTO: STAR
BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, inset, speaks at a rally organised by city BNP in front of the party office at Paltan in the city yesterday protesting countrywide 'anarchy and killing by AL-led 14-party combine'.

British FM to press India on climate change during trip

AFP, London

British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said yesterday she plans to press India on tackling climate change during a week-long visit to the country.

Beckett, whose trip starts today, will meet with her Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh before flying to Mumbai and Bangalore.

Britain unveiled a landmark report on the economic implications of climate change earlier this week, and wants a global deal to cut carbon emissions within two years - with India, China and the United States in the firing line.

India and China signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol on climate change but are not included in targeted emissions cuts.

The focus of Beckett's visit will be a follow-up of talks last month in London between Singh and British Prime Minister Tony Blair to enhance cooperation between the two countries on issues like terrorism and the environment.

"India is an important partner for the UK as we both work together to address the global challenges that face the world today," Beckett said in a pre-visit statement.

"Issues such as counter-terrorism and climate change can only be addressed successfully if all the key international players work together," she added.

In Delhi she said she aimed to discuss "cooperation on dealing with global challenges" with the Indian prime minister, the new foreign minister and other senior members of government.

"I will give a public address on how we can work together to tackle the impact of climate change."

Beckett will also address the growing economic ties between

India and its former colonial ruler during the trip.

She added: "Our bilateral relationship is underpinned by solid economic and people-to-people links. Cumulatively the UK is the third largest investor in India and India leapt last year from being the eighth to the third largest investor in the UK."

"Over one million people travel between the two countries every year, and our large British Indian community is one of the most successful in the UK. As our two prime ministers agreed, the relationship has never been better."

South Africa's apartheid-era leader Botha dies

AFP, Johannesburg

The leaders of the new multi-racial South Africa paid tribute Wednesday to their former enemy PW Botha, saying the late president deserved credit for paving the way to the end of the apartheid era.

The passing of Botha, who died in his sleep on Tuesday night at his home in the Western Cape, served as a sharp reminder of the bitter racial conflict, which he presided over as prime minister and then president from 1978 to 1989.

Botha and his whites-only government were regarded as international pariahs over their refusal to enfranchise the black majority and their outlawing of the African National Congress.

But Nelson Mandela, who spent the Botha years as a prison inmate before winning the first multi-racial elections in 1994, put aside any sense of bitterness to express condolences over the death of the man who branded him a terrorist.

"While to many, Botha will remain a symbol of apartheid, we also remember him for the steps he took to pave the way towards the eventual peacefully negotiated settlement in our country," Mandela said in a statement.

Suicide car explodes in Afghanistan

AFP, Kandahar

A suicide car bomb exploded near a convoy of foreign troops outside southern Afghanistan's Kandahar city yesterday, with first reports saying three soldiers were hurt, police said.

The International Security Assistance Force and US-led coalition could not immediately confirm the blast, which appeared

similar to scores carried out by the extremist Taliban movement.

The bomb was in a minibus that exploded as the convoy passed, police officer Abdul Ali told AFP. Initial reports said one vehicle was damaged and three foreign soldiers were lightly wounded, he said.

The road was blocked off and a large crowd had gathered at the site, an AFP reporter said.



PHOTO: STAR
Amra Muktiyoddhar Shantan forms a human chain on a road near Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

FFs' children submit memo to President

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amra Muktiyoddhar Shantan (Children of freedom fighters) formed a one-hour human chain at the adjacent road of Bangabhaban in the city yesterday urging the president and chief adviser of the caretaker government to prove his neutrality.

Leaders and activists of the organisation also submitted a memorandum to the president to press their 11-point demand.

The demands include reforms in the Election Commission (EC), removal of controversial four commissioners and secretary from EC, cancellation of appointments on political consideration, preparation of a fair voter list, setting up transparent ballot box, autonomy of the state-run television and radio and bringing the militants before the media prior to execution of death sentences.

President of the central committee of Amra Muktiyoddhar Shantan Humayun Kabir, Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Shangshad Central Command Council Chairman Prof Abdul Ahad Chowdhury, Dhaka Mohanagar Commander Fakir Sheikh Ziauddin Ahmed and other leaders of the organisation joined the human chain among others.

'Kyoto Protocol a symbolic failure'

REUTERS, Canberra

Australia, a major coal exporter and producer of greenhouse gases, said yesterday it would use new technologies to make fossil-fuels cleaner and tackle climate change, but continued to reject the Kyoto Protocol.

Prime Minister John Howard said Kyoto was mere symbolism as it did not include major greenhouse emitters such as India, the US and China.

He said an alliance of the world's biggest polluters - Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and the United States - called the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, offered a more practical way to fight climate change.

"Symbolism will not clean up the air, symbolism will not clean up greenhouse gas emissions, practical methods will. The thing that matters is doing things," Howard said.

Under the Asia-Pacific Partnership formed in 2005, Howard said Australia would spend A\$60 million (\$46 million) on 42 projects, such as solar and clean coal, which separates greenhouse gases from coal-fired power station emissions for disposal underground or in water.

The government last week said it would spend A\$75 million on the world's largest solar power plant, which would start operating in 2013. Howard has also said nuclear energy may one day be an option for Australia.

Howard's announcement came a day after a British report warned that failure to tackle climate change could see the world economy facing a 1830s-style Depression.

Australia, along with the United States, refuses to sign the Kyoto Protocol, aimed at reducing greenhouse gases, arguing it would unfairly impact the country's fossil fuel-reliant economy. Australia is the world's biggest coal exporter.

Howard said Kyoto favoured British and European interests.

"We have to be careful in what we do that we serve the interests of Australia. The interest of Europe and the interests of Australia are not the same," he said.