



Protesters march as they take part in a demonstration against India's new citizenship law in Guwahati, Assam yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

KSA slams Turkish approval of Libya deployment

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia yesterday condemned the Turkish parliament's approval of a military deployment to Libya, which is aimed at shoring up the UN recognised government in Tripoli.

Turkey's parliament approved the deployment on Thursday following a request for assistance by the beleaguered Government of National Accord.

"Saudi Arabia expresses its rejection and condemnation of Turkey's latest escalation in the Libyan issue," the official Saudi Press Agency said, citing the foreign ministry.

The GNA has been under sustained attack since April by eastern Libyan strongman General Khalifa Haftar.

Haftar is backed by Turkey's regional rivals -- Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

"This Turkish escalation forms a threat to security and stability in Libya as well as to Arab security and regional security as it is interference in the internal affairs of an Arab country in flagrant violation of all relevant international covenants and principles," the SPA said.

Analysts warn that Turkey's deployment of troops risks plunging Libya deeper into a Syrian-style proxy war between regional powers.

Libya has been mired in conflict since a Nato-backed uprising in 2011 toppled dictator Moamer Kaddafi, with rival administrations in the east and the west battling for supremacy.

Saudi Arabia's rivals, Turkey and Qatar, have taken the side of the GNA in the capital Tripoli.

No date was given for the potential Turkish troop deployment.

28 killed

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GNA forces accused those loyal to Haftar of the strike, posting photos of the victims and the wounded on Facebook.

However, pro-Haftar forces have not claimed responsibility for the attack.

More than 280 civilians and more than 2,000 fighters have been killed since the start of Haftar's assault on Tripoli, according to the United Nations. The fighting has also displaced some 146,000 people.

The UN Security Council last month renewed its calls for a ceasefire in Libya, and urged foreign actors to honour an arms embargo on the country -- which Jordan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates have regularly violated, according to a confidential UN report seen by AFP.

Mob beats

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seeing locals gathering.

Locals then beat Mamun to death before police reached there.

The law enforcers recovered the body and sent it to Jashore General Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

A case was filed with Abhayanager Police Station.

Drug dealer

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Four policemen were also injured in the gunfight, he added. Samuda's body was kept at the hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Police claimed to have recovered 10,000 yaba pills from the spot.

Rescuers race to save wildlife

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yesterday.

American pop star Pink said she would donate US\$500,000 to the firefighters, a donation matched by Australian actress Nicole Kidman.

World number one Ash Barty pledged to handover all her winnings from this week's Brisbane International tennis tournament -- potentially US\$250,000 -- to the Red Cross.

Around 200 fires continued to burn yesterday, many out of control, although only a handful prompted emergency warnings as temperatures dipped.

Everywhere, millions of beleaguered residents struggled to come to grips with a catastrophe that has taken place on a near-continental scale, unfurled over months and altered daily life, reports AFP.

"We're in uncharted territory," New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian said. "We can't pretend that this is something that we have experienced before. It's not."

Authorities have struggled to keep pace with the severity of the crisis -- which has now scorched an area almost the size of Ireland.

DISAPPEARING HABITATS
The animals Vicki Lett cares for include koalas, wallabies, kangaroos

and various species of possums.

While rehabilitation can take months, releasing them back into their natural habitat requires that habitat to exist.

Right now it is burning, Lett said, and with the scale of this year's fires, it is unclear how long it will take to rejuvenate and for release to be possible.

The fires have also caused a drop in bird, rodent and insect populations.

"When that happens, then, of course, that's going to affect the larger ecosystem, because that's the building blocks for a whole community," Lett told Al Jazeera, adding that everything has a role in nature from breaking things down, being eaten by other animals, or spreading seeds.

"We just cannot minimise the effects of losing those smaller species."

Bats are also in danger, not only from fires and habitat loss, but soaring temperatures.

WIRES Flying Fox coordinator Storm Standford estimated that about 50 percent of this year's infant grey-headed flying foxes have died.

"For the past six weeks, what we're seeing is mass abandonment of young, and that's odd," Standford told Al Jazeera, as two baby flying foxes grappled noisily for her attention. "Ecologically it's really not clear what

is going on for them."

In some areas, wildlife carers are seeing an increase of up to 200 or 300 percent of dead or abandoned infants, Standford said.

While the situation is dire, many Australians are working hard to ensure the animals that do not burn have the means to survive.

Fires began burning in Lucille Hoy's region at the end of October, but in the week before Christmas, the flames reached the national park that borders her home town of Lithgow.

The Pilates instructor told Al Jazeera that not only were hundreds of animals dying in the flames, but those who managed to survive were dehydrated and starving, their vegetation wiped out.

Within days of connecting with local wildlife groups and posting an appeal on Facebook, her home became a supply hub.

Hoy began receiving deliveries of hundreds of kilogrammes of wildlife pellets as well as medical supplies -- particularly for burns -- as well as water containers.

Hoy said many locals were starting to help with distribution, but with the scale of the destruction, the need was likely to continue long after the fires had burned out.

That's how the light gets in

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decided to set up a library, accessible to both women and men.

"I particularly wanted to develop reading habit among girls and young women of Dashiarchhara because unlike boys, they cannot travel outside easily and learn about the world," she asserted.

Besides, there is no library in any of the nine education institutions of the former enclave with a population of approximately 8,000 people, informed Harun-ur-Rashid Chairman of Phulbari Union Parishad.

He said women do not want to visit the library established by the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh in Kalirhaat village market in Dashiarchhara, as it remains open mostly in the evening and has only 40 books on religion.

In contrast, Momotaj's library has a collection of 450 publications which include non-textbooks from novels, poetry, children's literature, travelogues, science fictions, religious books, and guidebooks for high school and college goes.

"After the enclave exchange, I inspired my husband, Golam Maola to donate two decimals of land, where we built the tin hut spending Tk 45,000 from our joint savings," said the 37-year-old woman.

The couple spent another Tk 15,000 for purchasing the furniture and over the years Momotaj spent Tk 40,000 to buy used books for the library at a lower price.

"I buy at least two to three books every month and subscribe to a daily and a monthly newspaper for the

library spending about Tk 500 to Tk 600 per month," mentioned Momotaj, who along with her husband currently work as teachers at a mosque-based literacy programme run by Islamic Foundation.

"I also received Tk 29,000 cash, and books worth Tk 29,000 from the National Public Library in Dhaka in two installments," she informed.

Momotaj holds the post of the librarian and the general secretary of the seven-member committee that runs the library.

The library was named after her husband for his generous contribution of land and money, she said.

Returning from her day job in the morning, Momotaj spends most of her afternoons at the library, which remains open six days a week except Fridays from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm.

The astute librarian informed that although initially she charged Tk 2 for membership, seeing little response she made the library free for all.

Locals can sit inside the tin-shed and read, or borrow one book for three days, she said.

"If borrowers do not return books after three days, I personally visit their houses to collect the books," she said, adding that female patrons of her library mostly borrow books while the men prefer sitting at the library to read.

Mahmuda Akhtar, a first-year student of Kashipur Degree College, visits the library at least once or twice a week to borrow books.

"I like novels and have read a number of books from the Nazrul

collection of the library. I also like Syed Waliullah's work," she said.

Mahmuda, however, wants more recently published novels and books on current affairs.

Avid reader of thrillers, Madhobi Akhter, however, wants more guidebooks, with her secondary school certificate exam coming up.

"We cannot afford to buy more than one guidebook. It helps if the library has guidebooks by various writers," she said.

Assistant teacher of Dashiarchhara Multipurpose High School, Nur Hossain, who visits the library twice or thrice a week, said, "I try to encourage students to read books. But many do not want to come here because of the poor collection."

With a monthly salary of Tk 4,500 from her teaching job, Momotaj cannot afford to keep up with the library users' demand for new books.

Appealing to well-wishers for donations of non-text book for the library, she said she had applied for library registration to Kurigram District Public Library authority.

Librarian Mehedi Hasan of Kurigram District Public Library assured The Daily Star that the registration will be approved soon.

Once the library is registered, Momotaj hopes to increase her book collection, expecting the daily current visitors of about eight to ten people to go up as well.

Through her small library, the visionary librarian looks forward to continuing her task of enlightening the lives of the young people of Dashiarchhara.

60 DR Congo troops killed by militia since October: army

AFP, Kinshasa

Militants have killed 60 Democratic Republic of Congo soldiers since October in the restive east of the country, the army said in a statement Saturday.

"In the space of two months, 60 brave combatants have fallen in the field of honour" in the military campaign against fighters of the Islamist Allied Democratic Forces around the eastern city of Beni, military spokesman General Leon Richard Kasonga said.

A total of 175 other soldiers have been wounded, he added.

Kasonga added that there was an ongoing campaign online and in certain media accusing the FARDC (Congoese armed forces) as well as the UN's MONUSCO peace-keeping mission of "colluding with the slaughterers".

This he said was merely a bid to discourage the troops who remain "determined to carry out their mission to eradicate the ADF".

ADF fighters have killed more than 200 people since the army launched an offensive against the militia on October 30, according to a toll compiled by civil society groups.

Such figures have sparked anger over the authorities' response.

The Islamist militant group began as a rebellion hostile to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, one of Africa's longest-ruling leaders having seized power in 1986.

The group fell back into eastern DRC in 1995 and appears to have halted raids inside Uganda. Its recruits today are people of various nationalities.

Army chief of staff General Celestin Mbala and his team have been based in Beni since the end of November.

General John Numbi, a close associate of former president Joseph Kabila and the army's inspector general, arrived a few days later. He is under EU sanctions for his part in deadly crackdowns on protesters during Kabila's rule.

Last month, the Congoese army said it had "neutralised" 80 ADF fighters, including four of its six main commanders since the operation began in October.

The ADF has been active in the region for nearly 25 years, attacking both civilians and security forces.

They are accused of killing some 1,000 civilians since October 2014.

ICT prosecutor removed

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to resign and leave. I am looking into the matter," the minister replied at the time.

But nothing was done until yesterday when the ministry issued a circular removing Ali from the post for "breaching discipline and professional conduct and committing serious misconduct".

Asked about it, Anisul last night said, "Do you have any problem if we take action after verifying everything?"

About the government spending on someone who had not been discharging duties, the minister said, "Steps would be taken to get the money refunded."

Ali, who had enjoyed the status of additional attorney general, was suspended on February 24, 2016, after the Chief Prosecutor's Office of the tribunal wrote to the ministry, seeking "necessary actions" against him.

He joined as a prosecutor in October 2011.

On February 14, 2016 the Chief Prosecutor's Office wrote to the ministry that Ali had "disobeyed" his assigned duties and tried to "exert illegal influence for securing bail for an accused in a case pending with the tribunal".

On that day, the Chief Prosecutor's Office withdrew Ali until further notice from all the war crimes cases. Ali, however, refuted the allegations against him.

Though the accused in question was not named in the letter, several prosecutors said it was Jatiya Party lawmaker MA Hannan, arrested in 2015 for his alleged crimes in 1971. The tribunal denied him bail on February 4, 2016. He is now in jail.

WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY

Ali had been paid Tk 1,11,560 in salary and risk allowance and Tk 10,000 for fuel.

He received his salary until last month, said Prosecutor Zead Al Malum.

It is estimated that he had received around Tk 38 lakh in salary and about Tk 3.20 lakh in fuel costs.

Zead said Ali handed over the vehicle to the authorities in November last year when another prosecutor Tureen Afroz was removed for the post following allegations of misconduct. His police protection was withdrawn then.

"He has been wasting public money for the last three years. The government should have removed him much earlier," Zead told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Chief Prosecutor's Office sent a letter to the law ministry around a month ago to take action, he said.

Another prosecutor said, "He [Ali] used to come to the office once a month to collect his cheques."

"He enjoyed all the benefits we avail. The difference is we have to deal with the cases but he hadn't," the prosecutor said, wishing anonymity.

Contacted, Ali said, "I wanted to resign after I was withdrawn from the cases. But I was asked to stay in the post until the allegation was proved."

But he didn't say who asked him to occupy the post.

Ali, now a lawyer in High Court and Dhaka Judges Court, claimed that he used to go to his office once or twice a week.

"I withdrew the salary because I was not removed from my job."

HC rule for counsellors

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to the article 17 (ka, kha), 18 (1, 2) and article 32 of the constitution.

Every citizen of Bangladesh has the right to get proper education and health service and the state should take effective measures to ensure it. But drug abuse, suicide attempt, moral degradation, reckless lifestyle, inattentiveness in study is widespread among students. That is why psychologists and counsellors

are needed in every educational institution, said the writ.

Chairman of the University Grants Commission, secretaries to the Education Ministry, Public Administration Ministry, Health and Family Welfare Ministry, Primary and Mass Education Ministry and Director General of the Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Directorate were made respondents to the rule.

Won't send workers

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the brokers. The ministry will get them registered and will be able to hold them accountable when they do something illegal.

"My prime target is to ensure that the workers can go abroad by spending an amount set [by the authorities]."

He didn't say what that sum could be.

Abuses faced by women migrants in Saudi Arabia were widely reported at home and abroad. Salim said they negotiated with Saudi Arabia and ensured that the employers accused of abusing women migrants were brought to justice.

He said the remittance sent by Bangladeshi migrants last year was \$18 billion, which is 16.2 percent more than that of the previous year. He added that the growth can be attributed to the government's 2 percent incentive on the remittance.

A total of 214 recruiting agencies were accused last year of not ensuring protection of female domestic workers in Saudi Arabia and violation of laws, he said. Licence of one agency was revoked and two other agencies were suspended.

A total of 3,658 dead bodies of Bangladeshi migrants arrived last year, he said.

Man fined for throwing coins

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cost in the region of 140,000 yuan (£16,000), and announced legal action would be taken against the passenger.

Lu has been ordered by the Yixiu District People's Court in Anqing, Anhui province, to pay 120,000 yuan (£13,000) in damages to the Chinese budget carrier Lucky Air, reports the South China Morning Post.

He told the court that Lucky Air should have reminded passengers before boarding that they should not throw coins into plane engines.

It's not the first time a passenger has attempted to toss coins into an aircraft engine for good luck.

In 2017 there were two separate incidents recorded of elderly women engaging in the practice, one of whom was also flying from Anqing with

Lucky Air.

The other passenger, flying from Shanghai to Guangzhou with China Southern Airlines, attempted to throw nine coins into the engine to pray for safety.

Eight missed but one hit the mark, delaying the flight by five hours.

The practice of throwing coins for good luck is associated with some religions such as Buddhism.