

Turkey vows to retaliate if army posts in Idlib threatened

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey warned yesterday it will retaliate "in self-defence" if any of its army posts in northwest Syria are threatened amid increasing attacks by regime forces on the country's last major opposition bastion.

Ankara established 12 observation posts under a September 2018 deal with Russia, a major ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, to prevent any onslaught in Idlib.

The city is home to some three million people, around half of whom have been displaced by violence in other areas.

But despite a ceasefire arranged by Damascus and Ankara, which backs the rebels, the regime's deadly offensive has sparked an exodus of thousands of civilians toward the Turkish border.

"The regime's attacks on Idlib are massacring innocent civilians and causing humanitarian tragedy," the Turkish defence ministry said on Twitter.

Victims

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Many mothers are compelled to quit their jobs due to a lack of child care facilities at the workplaces, she said.

Violence against women is rising not only in the workplaces, but also at homes and public places, she said.

"It is important to ensure protection for those who protest sexual harassment," she said.

Abul Hossain, project director of Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women of the Women and Children Affairs Ministry, said the survivors of violence suffer in every stage when they seek legal redress.

He urged the survivors to call the hotline numbers -- 109, 333 or 999 -- to seek help.

Two women garment workers, who shared their experiences, said the superintendents often touched them inappropriately.

Sometimes women workers are not even allowed to go to the toilets, they said, adding that the women workers didn't complain fearing further abuse.

Tania Haque, associate professor of gender studies at Dhaka University, said workplace sexual harassment had implications for entire the company.

If sexual harassment is not checked soon, women's participation in workplace will be affected, she said.

Karmojibi Nari Executive Director Rokeya Rafique said companies should take the liability for any sexual harassment of a woman employee.

Citing an MJF study from 2018, its Gender Adviser Banasree Mitra Neogi, said about 23 percent women garment workers are sexually harassed at work.

Among the workers interviewed, 79.90 percent women and 79 percent men have not heard about the High Court directives regarding the prevention of sexual harassment at work.

The MJF interviewed 425 workers of 12 factories in Dhaka and 10 factories in Chattogram last year. The anti-harassment committee, recommended by the HC, had been formed in only six of the factories.

Prothom Alo Associate Editor Abdul Qayyum, Bangladesh Labour Foundation Project Officer Ishrat Jahan, International Labour Organisation Training Officer Shipra Chowdhury, National Human Rights Commission Deputy Director M Rabiul Islam, Awaj Foundation President Mamtaj Begum, MJF Programme Officer Shoma Dutta also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Prothom Alo Assistant Editor Firoze Chowdhury.

'Robber' killed

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Hospital where doctors declared him dead, he added.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Three policemen -- Sub-inspector Jasim Uddin, Assistant Sub-inspector Lokesh Mahajan and Constable Abdur Rahman -- also sustained injuries during the gunfight, the OC said.

Police claimed to have recovered a pistol, three bullets and three sharp weapons from the spot.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the police claims.



Palestinian demonstrators chant slogans during a protest against US President Donald Trump's expected peace plan proposal in Bureij camp for Palestinian refugees in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

DU expels 67 for various offences

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suspended students will also be served a show-cause notices to explain within seven working days why they should not be expelled.

Two students were suspended for six months for attacking two journalists on the campus on September 23 last year. Besides, 30 students of the university were given different forms of punishment for adopting unfair means during different internal examinations of the university.

In another development, the DU authorities relieved assistant Proctor Lutful Kabir from administrative and academic duties following allegations of forgery in his PhD thesis. A three-member probe body, headed by Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) Prof Nasreen Ahmad, was formed in this regard and it was asked to submit a report within eight working weeks.

On January 31 last year, the DU expelled three students for their links

to a digital forgery gang and 12 others who got admitted to the university through forgery in 2017. The three are Mohiuddin Rana, student of physics and ex-assistant secretary of the BCL central committee; Abdullah Al Mamun, student of applied chemistry and chemical engineering and also leader of the BCL's Amar Ekushey Hall unit, and Navid Anjum Tonoy, student of geography and environment. They were arrested hours before the university's "Gha" unit admission test on October 20, 2017.

Later, a case was filed with Shahbagh Police Station in this connection. The Criminal Investigation Department of police probed the case and pressed charges on June 23 last year against 125 people, including Rana, Mamun, Tonoy and the 63 now-expelled students.

The CID arrested 47 of the 125 accused, including the alleged mastermind Alip Kumar Biswas, a suspended assistant director of

Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan.

The 78 other accused are absconding. The main four accused, including Kumar, are now on bail. Police tracked down the gang members following a series of arrests since October 2017, when investigators raided two dormitories hours before the "Gha" unit admission test.

In its investigation, the CID found that the questions were leaked mainly in two ways: from a printing press on Indira Road in the capital the night before the exams and through digital devices minutes before the tests began.

Admission seekers were given the answers via ear-pieces a few minutes into the exams.

The investigators said the gang also struck deals with government job aspirants and public university admission seekers in exchange for hefty sums and helped many cheat their ways into universities and government offices.

11 killed in road crashes

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The dead are Jahanara Begum, 55, and the driver's assistant Imam Hossain, 35, said Kefayet Ullah, OC of Raozan Police Station.

In Jashore, a teenage boy died after a motorbike hit railing of a bridge in Bergobindapur area of Chougachha upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Rahul Hossain, 14, a class-nine student of a local high school.

Quoting witnesses, police said Rahul was driving a motorbike with one of his friends on the pillion. When the bike reached at

Bergobindapur area, he lost control and hit the railing of a roadside bridge.

Both of the riders were seriously injured. Locals rescued them and took them to Chougachha Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared them dead, said Sumon Hossain, ASI of Chougachha Police Station.

In Dhaka, a man died after a bus ran him over in Sayedabad area yesterday.

The victim, Omar Faruq Tuhin (28), fell from his motorcycle and was crushed under the wheels of a

bus, said Inspector Bacchu Miah of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) police outpost.

Omar Faruq was on his way to Jatrabari from Motijheel when a 'Ashiyan City Paribahan' bus hit his motorbike from the back around 11:30am.

As soon as he fell on road, a bus of 'Turag Paribahan' ran him over leaving him critically injured, the police official said.

Tuhin was declared dead after he was rushed to DMCH. Police seized both the buses and detained the drivers, the official added.

Govt to allow formal

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Habib said.

"The decision will minimise the chances for a Rohingya kid to get radicalised (in the camps)," he added.

UN representative in Bangladesh Mia Seppo told AFP the move would "make it easier for them to go back home to Myanmar when the time is right for returns".

"This is an important and very positive commitment by the Bangladeshi government, allowing children to access schooling and chase their dreams for the future. They

have lost two academic years already and cannot afford to lose any more time outside a classroom," said Saad Hammadi, South Asia Campaigner at Amnesty International.

"It is important that access to appropriate, accredited and quality education be extended to all children in the Cox's Bazar area, including Rohingya refugees and the host community. The international community has a key role to play here in ensuring the Bangladesh government has the resources it needs to realize this goal."

Some Rohingya children have used fake Bangladeshi identity cards and hidden their ethnic identities to enrol in local schools.

Authorities last year expelled scores of them from schools in a drive condemned by rights groups.

Tens of thousands of other Rohingya Muslim children were also educated in madrassas set up by Islamic groups in the camps.

The decision came almost a week after UN's highest court ordered Myanmar to do everything in its power to prevent the genocide of Rohingyas.

Glass frogs reappear

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threatened by a hydroelectric project in the Carrasco National Park to the east of Cochabamba, the fourth largest city in Bolivia.

Glass frogs are tiny, measuring only 0.7-0.9 inches (19-24 millimetres) and weighing just 2.5-2.8 ounces (70-80 grams). They can be found in the departments of La Paz (west), Cochabamba, Santa Cruz (east) and Chuquisaca

(southeast).

Some frogs' hearts and digestive tracts can be seen through their transparent bellies.

Those found in the Carrasco National Park had a transparent belly with a "white chest. The bones and vocal sac of the males are dark green," the team said.

The three frogs found were taken to the K'ayra amphibian conservation centre at the Alcide d'Orbigny

museum.

Experts will try to encourage the frogs to breed as part of a conservation strategy.

The K'ayra Center is also home to a pair of Sphenocera water frogs, known as Romeo and Juliet, that scientists have been trying to convince to mate to help preserve their critically endangered species.

Their attempts have so far been in vain.

All 4 culprits

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released another video saying, "Hello friends! We might be in jail tomorrow. So there is a little chance we will meet you again."

Rab arrested the four on Friday in a case filed by the victim's mother with Sreepur Police Station on January 16.

The four are Sharif Hossain, 18, Imran Hasan Sujan, 19, Sharif Uddin Mollah, 20, and a 16-year-old boy.

According to the case statement, the incident took place on January 15 when the girl attended Sujan's birthday party at his house.

The perpetrators served her a drink spiked with sedatives. When she fell unconscious, the four accused took her to a bush and raped her.

Visiting the Nayanpur neighbourhood in Sreepur on Monday, these correspondents found that most locals were aware of their wicked activities.

In the last two and a half years, Sharif married four women and divorced three of them.

Sharif's relatives said he was too disobedient to listen to their words.

"He deserved a punishment. Now he will repent his deeds," said Sharif's father Sabaj Uddin Molla, a day-

labourer who is utterly frustrated with his son's activities, while talking to The Daily Star.

He said his son was dropped out of school when he was in class V.

A neighbour of Sharif said, he used to take drugs and maintained close relations with drug dealers in the locality.

Another arrestee Sujan has recently left school, said family members.

Locals said, the 16-year-old arrestee was a drug peddler in the area.

The Daily Star spoke to some local shopkeepers in Mollapara area where the four accused spent most of their daytime.

The shopkeepers said they didn't dare to protest their aggressive behaviour fearing insult.

The video, they captured on January 16 night, was recorded at a local salon in Nayanpur bus stand area. The salon is owned by one Habibur Rahman.

"When I was about to shut my salon around 10:00pm, the four came to my shop and recorded the video," Habibur said.

He claimed he was outside the salon when the video was captured.

The rape incident and the video sparked a backlash on social media.

Trump unveils

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economic revival plan announced last June.

The plan announced yesterday more than doubles the territory currently under Palestinian control, although it also recognises Israeli sovereignty over major illegal settlement blocs in the occupied West Bank, something to which the Palestinians will almost certainly object.

The plan calls for a four-year freeze in new Israeli settlement construction, during which time details of a comprehensive agreement would be negotiated, according to the Trump administration officials who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of Trump's announcement. However, it was not immediately clear if the freeze could be extended if a final deal is not concluded in the four years.

The officials added that the plan calls for the creation of the State of Palestine. It was previously unclear whether the plan would abandon the two-state solution.

Trump said Jerusalem will remain Israel's "undivided capital". But he also said under the plan, Eastern Jerusalem would serve as a capital of a State of Palestine. He did not elaborate.

Trump had already recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, moving US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas immediately rejected the US proposal yesterday.

"We reject this deal. We won't accept any substitute for Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state," senior Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya told AFP.

Sami Abu Zhuri, another official of Hamas, said Trump's statement was "aggressive and will spark a lot of anger".

"Trump's statement about Jerusalem is nonsense and Jerusalem will always be the land of the Palestinians," he told Reuters news agency. "The Palestinians will confront this deal and Jerusalem will remain a Palestinian land."

Earlier yesterday, thousands of

Palestinians rallied in the besieged Gaza Strip to protest the expected plan.

Netanyahu meanwhile said it was a "historic day" and thanked Trump for his proposal. He said if Palestinians agree to the plan, Israel will be willing to negotiate "right away".

Netanyahu's election rival, Benny Gantz, who was also in Washington, DC, this week said he too supported the plan.

"The president's peace plan is a significant and historic milestone indeed," Gantz told reporters on Monday.

Palestinians have previously said the United States cannot be an honest broker for peace in the region, accusing it of pro-Israel bias.

In addition to moving the US embassy to Jerusalem, the Trump administration has also slashed hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid to the Palestinians.

The Trump administration in November reversed decades of US policy when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that Washington no longer regarded Israeli settlements on occupied West Bank land as inconsistent with international law.

US officials said they were braced for initial Palestinian skepticism but hoped that over time they will agree to negotiate. The plan places high hurdles for the Palestinians to overcome to reach their long-sought goal of a state.

It remains to be seen also how Israel responds, given the pressures its right-wing prime minister, Netanyahu, faces going into his third attempt at re-election in less than a year.

Both Trump and Netanyahu face political challenges at home. Trump was impeached in the House of Representatives last month and is on trial in the Senate on abuse of power charges.

Yesterday, Netanyahu was formally indicted in court on corruption charges, after he withdrew his bid for parliamentary immunity from prosecution.

Both men deny any wrongdoing.

Ensure accountability

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not carried out. The administrations even violated directions of the apex court in this regard.

Sultana Kamal said, "If necessary the government should lawfully use its forces to evict those grabbers, no matter who they are."

Rights activist Syed Abul Maksud said the government needs to show its highest level of political commitment to save rivers.

Syed Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela), suggested that the NRCC request the cabinet division to send directions to all deputy commissioners to free their rivers from encroachment.


Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bapa, said from his many years' experience as part of the movement to save rivers, he has reached a conclusion that the government actually does not have any real intention of saving rivers.

"If the government really wants to free the rivers free from encroachment, nobody would be able to grab a single inch of any river," he said, adding that rivers are still being grabbed regularly.

He said that the last time the government made a commitment to save rivers, the Turag, Buriganga and other rivers in Dhaka became narrower as government officials legalised the deeds of river grabbers.

Rezowan Hussain Bhuiyan, of the department of Environment and Geography, Professor Mushfiq Salehin, of Bangladesh University of Engineers and Technology, Mir Sazzad Hossain, former member of Bangladesh India Joint Rivers Commissions, Abu Saleh Khan, executive director of Institute of Water Modelling, Dr Maminul Haque Sarker, adviser to Centre for Environment and Geographical Information Service, and Abu Naser Khan, chairman of Poribesh Bachao Andolon, also spoke in the seminar.

In Memoriam



'The greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or other material things, but rather a legacy of character and faith.

Yours is a perfect example of this, we miss and love you deeply, and are inspired by you daily.

- Family Members

Late-Col. Dr. Rokaiya Anis

Taliban kill 11 Afghan policemen

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councilman. A local police official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to brief reporters about the attack, also gave the same account.

Six others were wounded in the overnight attack in Pul-e Khumri, provincial council member Samiuddin Nazir told DPA news agency.

A spokesman for the Taliban, Zabiullah Mujahid, however, put the death toll at 17, adding that one officer was taken hostage. The group has, at times, exaggerated its claims.

The attack comes one day after the Taliban claimed it shot down an American military

plane in Ghazni province - a claim the US military denies.

FREQUENT ATTACKS

Insider attacks have been steady throughout Afghanistan's 18-year conflict, with US and Nato troops the most frequent targets.

Last July, two US service members were killed by an Afghan soldier in the southern province of Kandahar. The shooter was wounded and arrested. In September, three US military personnel were wounded when a member of the Afghan Civil Order Police fired on a military convoy, also in Kandahar.

The Taliban have a strong presence in Baghlan, one of the most troubled provinces

in Afghanistan last year, and frequently target Afghan security forces in and around the capital.

Last September, Taliban fighters attacked Pul-e Khumri city in a bid to overrun it and were driven out by security forces only days later.

The Taliban currently control or hold sway over approximately half the country.

The US and the Taliban are currently attempting to negotiate a reduction in hostilities or a ceasefire. That would allow a peace agreement to be signed that could lead to the withdrawal of US troops and open the way to a broader post-war deal for Afghans.