

Bush's 'war on terror' faces harsh criticism

AFP, Paris

At home and abroad, US President George W. Bush's "war on terror" was facing mounting criticism on Sunday over fears that fundamental human rights and freedoms were being eroded.

Actors, writers, lawyers, politicians, and millions of ordinary people worldwide have in recent weeks all questioned the no-holds-barred US policy which many fear will be counter-productive.

Huge anti-war demonstrations have taken place in cities across the globe and more are planned for the new year, including a major one in Washington on January 18.

Spain's top anti-terror judge became the latest to add his voice to the growing chorus of critics, warning Sunday of "the risk of a false system of security being put in place to the detriment of freedoms and rights."

"The case of terrorists held in Guantanamo (the US base in Cuba), Afghanistan and Pakistan proves that security is trumping every other principle of justice or rights," said Baltasar Garzon said. Garzon, who has fought against Basque separatists in Spain, made a world name for himself when he

led international efforts to prosecute former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet for war crimes.

In Germany, where anti-US sentiment is at its highest level since the euro-missile crisis of the 1980s, Nobel prize-winning author Guenter Grass called Bush's response to the September 11 attacks on the United States as "truly dangerous" and a major threat to world peace.

He compared the US president to a Shakespearean character who wants only to appear before his father, a dying king, and tell him: "Look, I have accomplished what you wanted."

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder narrowly squeaked home in recent elections after saying his country would not join any US-led strike on Iraq.

That declaration angered Washington, straining relations already damaged by comments from a former justice minister comparing Bush's methods on Iraq to those of Hitler.

Anti-terrorism procession on New Year's Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Antiterrorism Peace Movement brings out a procession in the city tomorrow against state terrorism and violation of fundamental human rights.

The procession, which starts off from the Ramna Batamul at 8:30am and ends at the Central Shaheed Minar, will also demand an end to death and violence in army and police custody and an inquiry into these.

The organisation, which brings together human rights activists, professionals and eminent personalities, has organised similar procession on the New Year's Day since 2000 to drum up public opinion against terrorism.

"We are bringing out the procession at a time when the government has created a new record in human rights violation and terrorism," Barrister Amir-ul Islam, convener of the organisation, yesterday told a press conference at the Supreme Court Bar Association office.

"Developments over the last 14 months or so have left the country's peace-loving people wondering what the future has in store for them," he said.

Barrister Amir termed the civil administration half-dead, saying the government deployed army to cover up its failures.

"However, their role has been questioned as they are enforcing laws without any legal coverage. Especially, the incidents of death and torture in army custody have been condemned nationally and internationally. Even President Iajuddin Ahmed has expressed concern over the custodial deaths."

Speaking at the press conference, Ozair Farooq, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, said the main objective of the procession was to create awareness among people against all kinds of repression and misdeeds.

Among others, senior lawyers Abdul Baset Majumder, Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Abdus Salam Talukder and Sudhansu Shekhar Halder, and film star Kabari Sarwar were also present at the press conference.

Edn policy

FROM PAGE 1
three persons -- principals of the Vigarunnisa Noon School and College and Scholastica and a former director general of the Technical Education Board."

The committee will include vice-chancellors of some public universities, including Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, National University, Islami University, Agriculture University and Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

Some educationists including Professor Wakil Ahmed, Professor Shamsur Ahsan, Professor Emajuddin Ahmed, Professor Asma Abbasi, principals of Dhaka Alia Madrassah and the Monipuripara High School and two representatives of teachers associations will also be included.

A joint secretary of the education ministry will work as member secretary to the committee and co-ordinator as well.

Alleged rape

FROM PAGE 12
caught him red-handed on Sunday. Police rescued the two minor girls from there.

The businessman was arrested in a case filed with Dighinala police station by Manik Mian, father of one of the victims, under the Women and Children Repression Prevention act.



Sales of warm clothes are going high with mercury going down due to winter.

Body of woman allegedly killed by husband exhumed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shyampur police yesterday exhumed the body of a woman who was allegedly murdered by her husband and his second wife.

They buried the body of the victim on the premises of their house at Janatabag, East Dania, on December 12.

The body of Zakia Begum Lulu, 40, first wife of Abdul Haq Milan, was exhumed following confessional statements of Milan and his second wife Aklima Khanam Sabuj.

Sources said Milan and his second wife killed Lulu on December 11 and buried her in a sack under a heap of sand. The following day, they left Dhaka for their village home at Lalimohan in Bhola.

Asked about the whereabouts of Lulu, they said that her death was a natural one and she was buried in Dhaka. Their relatives called police when they started making contradictory statements, police sources said.

Lalmohan police arrested them on December 16 and sent them to Shyampur police in Dhaka. Police produced them before the court on Sunday seeking a day's remand. The court granted the remand prayer.

During interrogation, Milan and Aklima confessed to murdering Lulu and burying her in their house.

Police, along with the accused, went to the spot yesterday noon and exhumed the body.

Milan and Aklima were placed on a fresh two-day remand on completion of their one-day remand yesterday.

ISPs

FROM PAGE 12
The BTRC for the first time agreed to provide nationwide ISP license at the cost of Tk 5 lakh with an annual renewal fee of Tk 3 lakh.

The Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA) yesterday hailed the BTRC decision for further rationalisation of tariff of ISP license and VSAT (very small aperture terminal) license.

"We congratulate the BTRC on making this move to reduce the basic license fee of ISPs which will help ICT to grow and enhance the Internet use," ISPA President Akhtaruzzaman Manju told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, said ISP license should incorporate the VSAT license because all the ISPs need to use VSAT for satellite link.

This is for the second time the BTRC has rationalised the tariff after it came into being in January this year. Earlier, when the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications and the Ministry of Finance used to run the affairs, a VSAT licensee cost US\$3,500.

Vacant posts

FROM PAGE 1
ing authority in the ministries and divisions "to give appointment to some posts independently without involving the Public Service Commission (PSC)".

In another major decision, it recommended transfer of surplus administrative and other officials in Dhaka and Chittagong to fill vacancies in mufassil towns.

The cabinet meeting also agreed in principle on a proposal to formulate Travel Tax Ordinance 2002 and another for amending the Post Office Act 1898.

The meeting also decided to form a cabinet committee to examine a proposal for framing an integrated law for the preservation and development of culture and tradition of various ethnic groups.

Members of the cabinet, cabinet secretary, the principal secretary to the prime minister and secretaries of the ministries concerned attended the meeting.

Russia vows security overhaul in Chechnya

AFP, Moscow

Russian prosecutors vowed Sunday to sack top security chiefs across Chechnya as political repercussions gained steam after a stunning suicide attack on the pro-Moscow headquarters in Grozny that killed at least 61 people.

Investigators were trying desperately to explain how a Chechen suicide bomb squad evaded detection and passing through several military road blocks to ram their way through a gate and destroy Moscow's political nerve centre in the tumultuous North Caucasus republic.

But pro-Kremlin officials, who have already accused separatist Chechen leader Aslan Maskhadov -- despite his denials -- of staging the attack, decided Sunday to crack down on the loose Russian security structure governing federal positions in the breakaway republic.

Deputy Prosecutor General Sergei Fridinsky said investigators had concluded that security broke down not only in Grozny but across Chechnya as the vehicles packed

with bombs equivalent to around one tonne of TNT drove through the war zone.

"Because of this... we have prepared a report which poses the question of dismissing the commanders who oversee (security) of government buildings, and the commander of the city of Grozny," Fridinsky said.

"Besides that, in the coming days, we will present formal charges against specific people who allowed these security breaches, and let through the explosive-packed vehicles onto the site."

His comments came hours after angry accusations from a Kremlin-appointed official in Chechnya, Viktor Kazantsev, who charged that "irresponsibility and carelessness" allowed the attack to succeed.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who won the presidency in March 2000 on the back of popular support for the offensive, has still not made public comments on the assault -- although he did send a message of condolence to the Chechen administration. Friday's attack was the second

major strike on a Russian target in two months -- following the hostage crisis at a Moscow theatre in October -- and left the Kremlin again scrambling in a bid to portray the attackers as international "terrorists" rather than independence fighters.

One of the guards on check-point duty in Grozny told AFP he had seen the vehicles break through the fences but that everything had happened too quickly for them to make precise observations.

2 young men

FROM PAGE 12
ward commissioner Golam Mawla Shanu, who is the prime accused of AL mayoral candidate SMA Rob murder case and is now in Khulna district jail in that connection.

Local people suspect that the victims might have been Shanu's rivals in the shrimp trade. Police recovered three pairs of leather sandals, two woolen sweaters, a large dagger and a fishing net from the murder spot.

The bodies were taken to Dumuria thana.

Detention of leaders, workers worries AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League has expressed concern at the continued detention of its leaders and workers even after being granted bails by the High Court.

At a resolution of the party, taken at a meeting of the newly formed AL presidium, speakers said, "The government's repression has gone to the extent that AL members are not being released even after bails are granted from the High Court."

Acid attack on schoolgirl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

A schoolgirl of class seven suffered severe burn injuries as some miscreants threw acid on her in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Rupashi Begum, 14, daughter of Gias Ali of village Amalsar under Sreepur upazila of Magura district. She was admitted to the Magura Sadar hospital in a critical condition.

Victim's mother Nazma Akhter said a recent marriage proposal for her daughter was refused and alleged that the acid attack was carried out in revenge against the family.

47 KU officers on indefinite work abstention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Forty-seven officers of Khulna University (KU) yesterday went on an indefinite work abstention demanding removal of acting registrar Prof Md. Amir Ali accusing him of conspiring to foil the election to the executive committee of Khulna University Officers' Welfare Association (KUOWA) due to be held today.

Chief Medical Officer of KU Dr AKM Kamrul Islam while addressing a press conference yesterday morning alleged that the acting registrar is being instigated by the KU VC to thwart today's election through creating campus unrest with the help of some notorious hoodlums.

Bahauddin Nasim

FROM PAGE 1
allow his lawyer to meet him following a high court order. Also, Bahauddin's wife Dr Sultana was allowed to meet her husband after 14 days of his arrest.

Bahauddin was shown arrested in connection with the attack on the motorcade of the then leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia in Madaripur. A seditious case and another case relating to illegal dollar transaction were filed against him.

Interestingly, Bahauddin's name was not mentioned in the FIR of Khaleda's motorcade attack case. Later, he was accused of instructing armed men to attack the motorcade of Khaleda through cellular phone from Dhaka. When the attack was carried out, Madaripur was not linked to cellular network, Bahauddin's lawyer told the court.

Bahauddin got ad interim bails in all the three cases. But he was detained for 30 days under the Special Powers Act on November 18 moments before he was to get released from the jail. This time, he was accused of cooking up conspiracy against the state while in custody.

Before his 30-day detention expired, the authorities extended it for another 90 days on December

They are being shown arrested in new false cases and detained."

The presidium meeting was held for three consecutive days, from Friday to Sunday, at the party's Dhanmondi office in the city. Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

The AL expressed concern at the transferring of imprisoned AL leaders and intellectuals from one jail to other and their alleged ill treatment. It demanded immediate release of all political detainees.

The AL presidium also expressed concern at deaths of 49 people in army custody.

Criticising unabated price hikes of essentials, the main opposition party demanded the government lower prices.

Reuters stringer

FROM PAGE 12
Defence lawyers M Sajwar Hossain and Kallayan Kumer Saha appeared in the court at 11 am yesterday and came to know that the court on Sunday relieved him of the charges.

When contacted, Sajwar Hossain expressed his deep concern over the court order without their knowledge.

Enamul was arrested on December 12 in connection with the filing of a report linking al-Qaeda elements with the Mymensingh cinema hall blasts. On December 17, he was shown arrested in the blast case on the basis the Criminal Investigation Department's report to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka.

He was shifted to Sylhet jail from the Dhaka Central Jail a few days back.

Shahriar

FROM PAGE 12
tion to the CMM court also said that since the HC stayed the remand prayer, there is no scope for hearing on it.

Shahriar was arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) on December 7 on charge of anti-state activities.

Later, on December 12, he was shown arrested in the seditious case filed against two foreign journalists Leopoldo Bruno Sorrentino and Zaiba Naz Malik and their local guides Saleem Samad and Prilla Raj.

Shahriar was earlier shifted to Chittagong jail from Dhaka Central jail.

New Year

FROM PAGE 1
to 1:00am. Besides, vehicular movement on the campus will remain suspended from 10:00am.

The DU administration has taken stern measures to avoid untoward incidents during New Year celebrations on the campus since Shaon Akhtar Badhon was harassed near the TSC in 2000.

Meanwhile, sources said measures have also been taken to check unruly celebrations on the streets and in guesthouses, bars and expensive hotels and restaurants in the city.

Some 20 check-posts will be set up at all the entry points of the city's posh and diplomatic areas, including Mohakhali, Banani, Baridhara, Kakoli, Shahjapur, Gulshan and Banani.

As many check-posts will also be there in Dhaka University and its adjoining areas.

Officials said there would be some 17 special police squads on patrol across the city.

The police have been asked to take necessary legal action against, and if necessary go for raid on, suspected hotels, guesthouses and bars to check indecent activities on the night of December 31.

Jt forces nab

FROM PAGE 12

forces arrested 13 people including five listed criminals from different areas in 16 districts. They also seized a pipe-gun, one single barrel gun and one local made gun.

Our Sylhet correspondent reports that the joint forces arrested a criminal Mostafa Uddin in Chandagram in Borolekha upazila. After interrogated he was handed over to the Biani Bazar Police Station.

In Bagerhat, the joint forces arrested an infamous pirate from Morelganj upazila of the district. Tipped off, a team raided his hideout and picked up Mohammad Shohag, 28, allegedly a member of a crime cartel of the Sundarbans area. Later, he was handed over to police.

Our Rajbari correspondent reports that the joint forces so far have arrested 111 people including 44 listed criminals from different parts of the district over the last 73 days since the drive started on October 17. The forces also seized 13 firearms along with 21 rounds of ammunition.

Police arrested 1,375 people including 10 listed criminals across the country in 24 hours ending at 6:00 yesterday morning.

They also seized five firearms, five other lethal weapons and three

bullets during the period and filed seven cases against 13 people under the Arms Act, said a police press release.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police in a press release yesterday said they arrested 269 people, 30 of them wanted for different charges, during a special drive in the last 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday.

During the drive, police also took legal action against 1,556 vehicles and seized 55 others as the drivers did not have any license. Fifty people were also arrested for violating traffic rules, the press release added.

AL council

FROM PAGE 12
workers could not hold meetings in their areas, fearing persecution, they said.

The new ALCWC holds its first meeting at the party central office in the city tomorrow (January 1).

The meeting will discuss organisational matters and movement programmes to protest alleged government repression on the opposition and violation of human rights.

The meeting will be chaired by party President Sheikh Hasina.



Hundreds of rickshaw-pullers demonstrate at Muktangan in the city yesterday against the ban on rickshaws on many thoroughfares like Mirpur Road.

Last day for polluters

FROM PAGE 1

The government's decision has, however, left commuters without an adequate number of public transports. To replace the aging and polluting fleets of three-wheelers, the government has so far given permissions to 5,000 four-stroke, CNG-run auto-rickshaws to ply the roads.

Although the government has said that a few hundred single-decker buses, human haulers, would soon be introduced on the roads, these alternative modes of transport would take at least a month to start operating. During the current phase, only 155 buses will start plying the roads, the traffic department sources confirmed.

The banned two-stroke vehicles will operate on the outskirts of the city and elsewhere in the country. Some auto-rickshaw owners of the city have said that businessmen from Narayanganj, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Chittagong, Rajshahi,

Natore, Noagaon, Khulna and Sylhet have bought these vehicles.

The rehabilitation of thousands of drivers of two-stroke vehicles remains uncertain. Out of 1000 four-stroke auto-rickshaws for the rehabilitation programme, only 50 vehicles have been made available. President of the 'Autorickshaw Owners and Drivers Association' Md. Fazlul Haq said that the communication minister promised rehabilitation of autorickshaw drivers several times but nothing has been done to fulfill the pledge.

When asked about the litigation, Director (programme) of BELA Syeda Rizwana Hasan said that the government was directed to take a total of eight different steps to control air pollution. But only one step has been taken in this regard. Unless the remaining seven steps are taken, the quality of city air will remain unchanged.

Deputy Commissioner (south) of Traffic Department, Abu Musa Md.

Fakhruul Islam Khan said they have taken 'enough preparations' to implement the decision of banning two-stroke auto-rickshaws. "If any two-stroke scooter is found on the road tomorrow, it would be seized and the driver would face prosecution," he added.

However, Environment and Forest Minister Shajahan Siraj claimed that the government is 'trying its best' to improve the city environment. He said that two-stroke vehicles would be totally withdrawn from the country in phases. But it might take three to five years, he added.

"CNG refuelling centres would have to be set up in every district, and then the government would think in terms of banning the pollutant vehicles," he said. The environment minister also said that from next January the remaining autorickshaws will have to install the catalytic converter.