

UN chief appeals for calm in DR Congo

AFP, United Nations

UN leader Ban Ki-moon has joined international appeals for calm in Democratic Republic of Congo where the presidential election has sparked political violence.

Ban noted the official results which "indicated" incumbent Joseph Kabila has won and "calls for any differences regarding the provisional results of the polls to be resolved peacefully through available legal and mediation mechanisms," said his spokesman Martin Nesiry in a statement released late Friday.

The UN secretary general "strongly condemns any acts of violence in connection with the electoral process" and "reiterates his call for calm and urges all candidates and their supporters to exercise restraint and refrain from any acts of violence, provocation and incitement to violence," the statement added.

Bangladeshi

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Paschimbanga Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee last night ordered a judicial enquiry into the fire tragedy, which claimed 91 lives including that of Gauranga, our correspondent in New Delhi reports.

Six senior executives of the hospital, co-owned by two private companies, were charged with culpable homicide and violating safety rules after being produced before a court yesterday. If proven guilty, they could be sentenced to 10 year's imprisonment.

Mamata told journalists in Kolkata yesterday evening, "The state government has decided to order a judicial enquiry into the hospital fire."

Asked who would head the enquiry, Mamata said, "The state assembly session begins on Monday. I will not speak much now."

"Since people have faith in the judicial system and a tragedy of huge dimension has occurred, we have made this decision. We have nothing to hide," she said.

She said police investigation would continue simultaneously.

Today forensic experts would make another attempt to collect samples and specimens from the basement of the fire-ravaged hospital annexe building-I, police said.

There was one to two feet water in the basement caused by the fire-fighting operations Friday. A team of State Forensic Research Laboratory (SFRL) tried to take the samples Friday but could not due to water logging.

Kolkata Police Commissioner RK Pachnanda said a patient of the hospital died yesterday, taking the toll to 91.

Joint Commissioner of Police Damayanti Sen, who is heading a police team appointed to investigate the fire tragedy, said all the deaths were caused by inhalation of toxic fumes which quickly filled the wards of the hospital.

Mosharraf

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minister, defying the experts' opinions. The division of the DCC has also divided the people.

Referring to the ruling Awami league arguments that a split DCC would increase services for city dwellers, he said it is not the corporation's task to solve gas, water and electricity crises in the capital. There are other authorities for these services.

Criticising the PM's recent remark, the BNP leader questioned how she could claim the economy is in a good shape when the share market is destroyed and the government is borrowing money from banks everyday.

Mosharraf called on the people to oust the government through mass upsurge as the nation's independence and sovereignty is not safe under this government.

Kamal slams

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government system and retaining Islam as state religion.

Dr Kamal, one of the framers of the country's constitution, came down heavily on the two major political parties -- ruling Awami League and opposition BNP -- for what he said was treating people as their subjects although they are the owners of the country.

The eminent jurist was speaking at his party's fourth national convention at the Institution of Engineers in the capital.

He stressed building national unity for fair politics in the country.

Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, said at the convention those who win national elections consider themselves owner of this country for five years. Bad people run this country, and this is an obstacle to democracy.

He also said wealthy persons dominate both parliament and politics in the country, and that is why democracy is nowhere.

"It now seems that people have lost their freedom of speech. For example, 300 MPs keep mum in the House as if they are speech-impaired," Kamal Hossain said.

"Not a single MP spoke on the bill for splitting Dhaka City Corporation, while it was passed within only four minutes. Nothing could be more disgraceful than this."

He went on, "MPs, except one or two, did not speak when the bill scrapping the caretaker government system, and keeping Islam as the state religion was passed in the House."

Kamal said asked about this, some lawyers told him, "Don't you understand why we had to remain silent in parliament?"

Allah has given them -- people's representatives -- ears, mouth and eyes to hear, speak and see. But they sit in the House without speaking anything for people, said a disappointed Kamal.

"It will be disrespect to Bangabandhu if you (lawmakers) wear black coat (at like him) but keep mum in parliament," he added.

Citing the share market debacle, he said, "A large amount of money was lost from there. But no one spoke on the issue and protested this in the House."

Kader Siddique, Mahmudur Rahman Manna and Abul Hasan Chowdhury, among others, also spoke at the convention.

Ershad

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interests of the citizens of Sylhet," Ershad told a rally on Sylhet Alia Madrasa premises after reaching here on a two-daylongmarch.

A key component of Awami League-led grand alliance government, Jatiya Party (JP) started the long march towards Sylhet from Dhaka yesterday to protest building of the dam in India's Manipur state.

"India can't build any dam

unilaterally on an international river as per the 1966 Helsinki Rules.... It has violated international laws by taking a unilateral decision," he pointed out.

Terming it a national problem, he urged all the political parties to jointly protest the Indian move. "It is not the time for creating difference. Let us work together to find out a solution."

The country's northern part has been facing adverse effects of Farakka dam since its construction, maintained Ershad adding, now the Sylhet region will face the same fate if the Tipaimukh dam is built.

"If India builds the dam and an earthquake hits the area, the whole Sylhet region will go under water," he warned.

The former military strongman demanded India conducts a joint study with Bangladeshi experts on the environmental impacts of the dam.

Ruhul Amin Howlader, secretary general of JP urged the government to hold discussions with India immediately to settle the issue.

Chaired by party president member Atiqur Rahman Atiq, the rally was also addressed by presidium members Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Anisul Islam Mahmud, TIM Fazl Rabbi, Kazi Firoz Rashid and lawmaker Salma Islam, among others.

With his entourage riding on around 1000 vehicles, the JP chief started for Sylhet around 7:30am from the party's Banani office in the capital.

On his way to the divisional city, the former president also addressed nine roadside rallies in Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria, Habiganj and Sylhet districts.

Sylhet and its haors (wetlands) will face serious catastrophes if the dam is built on the common river Barak, he told a rally in Brahmanbaria. "The Tipaimukh dam issue will be taken to international court if India ignores Bangladesh's concerns."

The long march will leave Sylhet for Zakiganj upazila this morning and JP will hold a rally there before winding up the programme.

One killed

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Both of them were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where Sayeed succumbed to his injuries after an hour of admission.

The van's driver was held. According to police, he claimed that the motorcycle overtook his van at a high speed from behind and so he could not avert the accident.

Ghulam Azam could not be reached despite repeated attempts over telephone for his comments on the allegations against him.

Prosecution sources said after scrutinising the investigation report and relevant documents they have found that Ghulam Azam, the amateur of East Pakistan Jamaat-e-Islami, was the civilian supreme commander of the Peace Committee, Razakar, Al Badar and Al Shams, which had collaborated as auxiliary forces with the Pakistan occupation army in 1971.

Prosecution sources said they have proof that Jamaat leaders had met then Pakistan president Gen Yahya Khan and Gen Tikka Khan, the infamous "Butcher of Baluchistan", and hailed Operation Searchlight saying that Pakistan and Islam had been saved.

Jamaat-e-Islami leaders had built close relations with the Pakistani military rulers so that the Awami League is not handed over the power. The Awami League had won a landslide victory in the 1970 general elections. The Pakistani rulers had held the elections believing that Awami League would not win, sources claimed.

Nizami, president of All Pakistan Islami Chhatra Sangha in 1971, is likely to be charged with imprisonment, abduction, confinement, torture, rape, genocide in Pabna and other regions, and abetment of and attempt or

murder.

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An aircraft is what the crime busters need in such cases, he added. Even in the capital Rab faces traffic congestion when in operation. But with aircraft they can fly to crime spots in a short time.

Rab sent a proposal for helicopters to the government a year after its foundation on March 26, 2004.

In 2007-2008 fiscal year, the force was allocated a budget for copters for the first time. Then on, a budget was allocated for copters in every fiscal year. But because of budget deficit or bureaucratic tangles, the purchase of aircraft was delayed, said Rab.

Rab sources said once they get the choppers, they will be able to use airways to carry out their job in coordination with ground forces.

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