

Benghazi protesters turn on Libya's new ruler

AFP, Benghazi

Libyan protesters in Benghazi, cradle of the uprising that ousted Moamer Gaddafi, called yesterday for the man they helped bring to power in place of the slain dictator to quit over slow reforms.

Hundreds of men and women chanted slogans against Mustafa Abdel Jalil in the eastern city's Shajara Square, complaining of a lack of transparency and his unwillingness to forgive former Gaddafi fighters.

The square, whose name means "Tree" in Arabic, was the place where the first anti-Gaddafi rally was held on February 15, jump-starting the revolution that eventually overthrew the 42-year-old regime.

They prevail

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been providing financial assistance to some indigent meritorious students since 2004.

In 2010, private commercial bank Brac Bank extended its support to the noble cause.

Each of the 50 successful SSC (Secondary School Certificate) candidates will be given a one-off stipend of Tk 2,500 during admission and Tk 1,500 a month for two years.

Besides, 10 GPA-5 achievers at the HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) level will get a one-off stipend of Tk 13,000 and Tk 2,000 per month for four years.

All the students were awarded medals at the function.

Addressing the ceremony, speakers said these promising learners -- still in their youth -- can change the country.

Mohammad Aziz Khan, chairman of Prothom Alo Trust and Summit Group; Syed Mahubub Rahman, chief executive officer and managing director of Brac Bank; Abdul Quayum, joint editor and Anisul Huq, deputy editor of Prothom Alo; Tazim Ahmed, principal of Sunnydale School; and first Bangladeshi Everest conqueror Musa Ibrahim spoke at the programme.

Editor and Publisher of Prothom Alo Matiur Rahman was also present.

Human

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Act 2011', 'Ship Breaking and Ship Recycling Act 2011' and 'Bangladesh Citizenship Act-2011' were also approved, prime minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told journalists after the meeting.

He said the proposed 'Human Trafficking Prevention and Protection Act 2011' entitles a provision of death penalty, lifetime imprisonment and fines up to Tk5 lakh.

There will be a special tribunal in every district after the passage of the bill in parliament, said Azad.

In addition, for stealing newly-born children from hospitals or clinics, anyone will have to face lifetime imprisonment or 12 years rigorous imprisonment with fine.

If any person, by using own wealth or land, encourages or allows human trafficking, he or she will be awarded eight years in imprisonment.

In addition, any person or organised gang involved in human trafficking will have to serve 14 years imprisonment while 10 years for forcing and cheating anyone to prostitution, the prime minister's press secretary said.

Anybody developing or operating brothel will have to face five years' rigorous jail term. Any owner or leaser of houses allowing prostitution will have to face minimum two years and maximum five years rigorous imprisonment.

Meanwhile, the cabinet yesterday also approved the draft of president's speech to be delivered at the first session of parliament in the New Year.

Unemployment

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those sampled said they had discussed unemployment recently, an increase of one-third on the previous year's BBC poll.

Spain is at the heart of the debt crisis in the eurozone and has the highest youth unemployment in the region at greater than 40%.

Ghana, Mexico, Nigeria and Turkey were among the other countries where this topic appeared a particular concern, with a third or more of those sampled saying they had discussed the issue in the month before the survey.

One could speculate that growing concern about the lack of jobs is linked to current economic worries, such as financial problems for euro currency and the resulting slowdown of major economies.

But there is no certainty about this.

The first annual survey published in 2009 coincided with possibly even greater economic global turbulence linked to the collapse of the US investment bank Lehman Brothers.

Corruption and poverty emerge as hardy perennials of global debate.

All three annual surveys carried out so far have shown these topics to be near the top of the list.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

But the latest results show considerable differences between countries in the issues people find important.

In the US, France and Japan - all wealthy, developed nations - the state of the world economy emerged as the main talking point.

Risking life

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Tapan Kumar Sarker, director (administration) of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, said law enforcers could take action against the truck drivers for carrying passengers.

Police say they do take actions against the truck drivers involved in the illegal business. Reality, however, does not reflect their claim.

Truck driver Rezaul Islam says he knows carrying passengers by truck is illegal, but he still does it for an extra income.

"I've to bribe the highway police at least at two points for carrying passengers. At each point, they [police] take Tk 50 to 150," he claims.

Golam Rabbani, a truck helper, said they carry around 45 passengers regularly from Karwan Bazar to Joypurhat for Tk 40 to Tk 50 each. (A bus ticket from Dhaka to Joypurhat costs between Tk 200 and Tk 400).

The passengers are regular too. They come to the capital at regular intervals

Aman offers

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release of Boro rice stocks by big farmers and millers.

Abdul Majid Bablu, President of Khwajanagar Rice Millers Association in Kushtia, told this correspondent that Aman prices have started showing an upward trend following the public procurement move. Khwajanagar is one of the rice markets in the country.

Farmer Gopal Mohanto also said rice price in Dinajpur wholesale markets have risen by Tk 100 per two-mound sack, from Tk 1,100 to 1,200.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics records show Aman output last season stood at 12.7 million tonnes while the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) says rice output from an Aman acreage of over five million hectares this season is likely to be 13 million tonnes.

In a forecast last month, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said Aman output this time would be four percent higher than last year's. It also said cereal import requirement this fiscal year is expected to be lower.

As against an average

By contrast, corruption was the most frequently discussed issue in Nigeria, India, Turkey, Indonesia, Nigeria and Peru.

These are all developing nations, most with poor reputations for transparency in government and business.

In another group of developing countries, including China, Russia, Kenya and the Philippines, rising prices for food and energy were the main topic.

In Latin America, however, crime and violence emerged as commonly discussed themes.

Indeed in Brazil, famous for social tensions in its urban slums, along with Ecuador and Mexico, noted for drugs-related killings, crime and violence were the most talked-about subjects.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

People in developed nations appeared more concerned about the longer-term, less immediate threat associated with climate change than those sampled in poorer, developing economies.

But almost everywhere global warming had slipped down the ranking of issues discussed in the last month.

The topic was the most frequently talked about issue in 10 nations in last year's survey, but this year climate change topped the list only in Germany and Britain.

Fieldwork for the latest poll was carried out between July and September of this year by the polling firm Globescan on behalf of the BBC.

to pull rickshaw or to work as day labourers. After working for a few days, they go home by trucks.

However, most of them come to Dhaka by bus.

Md Mamun, a rickshaw puller from Sherpur upazila of Bogra, goes home every eight to ten days.

"I take truck because it's cheap. It costs me Tk 30 to Tk 40 whereas I've to pay Tk 200 to Tk 300 when I travel by bus," he told The Daily Star.

Shafiqul Islam, also a rickshaw puller, says he takes the risk of travelling by truck to save money.

"I go home by truck as money matters to me," said Shafiqul, who comes from Joypurhat.

Contacted, Md Jasim, senior assistant commissioner of traffic (Tejgaon zone), said they fined several such track drivers in the last six months.

"We've also filed some cases and confiscated a number of trucks," he said, adding that they would take more steps to prevent carrying of people by trucks.

annual cereal (rice, wheat and maize) import of 3.8 million tonnes during the 2006-10 period, the country imported 5.5 million tonnes of food grains last fiscal year (2010-11). It is projected that food import this year would be around 3.2 million tonnes, 0.6 million tonnes less than the previous average.

Records at the Food Division of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management show the country imported less than one million tonnes of food grains in the first five months of this fiscal year compared to two million tonnes in the corresponding period of last year.

The government imported about half a million tonnes of rice during July-November period while the public granaries have a stock of nearly 1.5 million tonnes of food grains due to large-scale procurement of rice in the last Boro season and carryover of last year's imports.

The food minister said the country's one million tonnes of annual wheat production could hardly meet one third of the domestic requirement. So import of wheat would continue.

Police are yet to arrest anyone in this connection.

Correction

Because of an editing error, our yesterday's story headlined "War crimes charges pressed against 3" misstated that around 30 million Bangalees were killed and 2 million Bangalee women were violated by the Pakistani forces and their collaborators during the Liberation War.

In fact, the numbers would be around 3 million and 200,000 respectively. We regret the mistake.

Criminal

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Earlier, Rab only kept fingerprints of arrested criminals for the Automated Fingerprint Identification System.

A total of 200 Rab personnel were trained by the experts of Tiger IT Bangladesh Ltd to gather biometric information and other data. Those trained personnel are now working at all the 49 camps of total 12 Rab battalions across the country.

Rab sources said while preparing the database, they reviewed criminal databases of different countries.

Lt Col Ziaul said the database would also enable investigators to access and verify vital information of an arrestee promptly. "The lack of comprehensive information in many cases leads to the failure of a law enforcer's part to promptly identify a criminal," he added.

2 workers

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to load construction materials onto the fifth floor, said Al-Amin, co-worker of the victim.

Co-workers took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Dhanmondi police said an unnatural death (UD) case has been filed in this connection.

Meanwhile, Shafiqul, a worker of a tailoring shop at Kamrangirchar, was helping construction workers remove some rods that were kept next to his shop.

At one stage, the rod he was carrying came into contact with a live roadside electric wire and he was electrocuted.

AKM Nasir Ullah, officer-in-charge of Kamrangirchar police station, said Shafiqul was taken to DMCH where doctors pronounced him dead.

Tipai dam

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"A director general of the foreign ministry has made an audacious statement. We would have replied even if the foreign minister had asked to explain. Khaleda Zia as prime minister wrote three letters to Indian premier for not building any dam at Tipaimukh," he told a discussion meeting at the Jatiya Press Club.

The Tipaimukh dam will be like a time bomb for Bangladesh as at least three crore people will be affected by it, he mentioned quoting experts.

Islamist outfit Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh organised the meeting.

Meanwhile, party Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi in a statement yesterday questioned how a department of the government could seek explanation from the leader of the opposition in parliament.

It is not only "unusual," but also a conspiracy of the ruling party, he alleged.

He also claimed that no Awami League government so far has protested building of Tipaimukh dam in any meeting of Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC). But BNP protested it twice in JRC meetings.

A foreign ministry statement on Friday explained the government's stance on the Tipaimukh project. It said though Khaleda Zia is protesting the dam now, she kept mum when she was at the helm of several previous governments.

Man shot

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euro for taka at a money-exchanging agency around 2:00pm. On his way home the muggers attacked him firing bullets and took the money.

His brother sent him the foreign currency from abroad, Abdul said.

Police are yet to arrest anyone in this connection.

Ghulam faces 52 charges

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evidence that Ghulam Azam and some other Jamaat leaders had allied themselves with Pakistan military regime even before the national elections of December 7, 1970.

The Pakistani rulers had held fair elections, thinking that Awami League would not win. They had planned to form a government headed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, founder of Pakistan People's Party.

Awami League, however, secured a landslide victory in the historic elections, and it prompted the rulers and pro-Pakistan political forces to plan a violent crackdown on Bangalees to cling to power.

After the Operation Search Light, the military action against the unarmed people of Bangladesh on the black night of March 25, 1971, the Jamaat leaders led by Ghulam Azam met the then East Pakistan governor and martial law administrator Gen Tikka Khan, the "Butcher of Baluchistan".

In the meeting, they hailed the operation, saying it had saved Pakistan and Islam, Rana Dasgupta added.

They promised Tikka Khan and Pakistan army full cooperation in rooting out the "anti-Pakistan forces", and also planned to form a

Share scam

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liquidity crisis, instead of focusing on the issue of lack of confidence among investors.

"The government is highlighting the liquidity crisis in the market in an attempt to hide something."

"It is a wrong assumption. It is not liquidity crisis, but a lack of confidence among investors. I would call it a game. There will be no positive outcome unless the game is stopped immediately," he said, asking the government to concentrate on rebuilding confidence among investors.

Criticising the government for not taking action against the market manipulators whose names were in the probe report, Khaled asked: "Who is more powerful -- the government or the market manipulators?"

The government formed a high-profile probe com-

mittee, headed by Khaled, after the stockmarket debacle in January.

The committee submitted its report in March and the government released it in April.

Referring to the finance minister's comments that the probe report was based on assumption, Khaled said the report was a blend of proof and perception. "But assumption and perception are not the same thing."

He said the SEC and its corrupt officials were responsible for the market manipulation.

"In our report, we recommended removing the corrupt officials. But the government did nothing, except for making two of them officers on special duty,"

"The previous SEC chairman is still working as an officer on special duty and drawing salary from the

public exchequer," he said.

Even the SEC was restructured with political appointees, not with professionally skilled people.

"There wasn't even a single week when the previous chairman and the existing one did not go to the finance ministry for advice. If the regulator is dependent on others, how can the investors derive confidence from them?" he questioned.

The SEC should be allowed to work independently, he added.

Economists, lawmakers, academicians, bankers and stock exchange members also spoke.

CPD Distinguished Fellow Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya moderated the dialogue, while CPD Senior Research Fellow Dr Khondker Golam Moazzem presented the keynote paper.

cer of Lokman murder case, yesterday told The Daily Star that they are hopeful about arresting rest of the people involved in the killing soon.

Narsingdi police had earlier arrested Ashraf Sarkar, Haji Selim, Masudur Rahman Tippon, Haji Faruk, Mahfuz Hossain alias Sabuj, Shahin, Nasir and Kazi Alam. Of them, Ashraf has been implicated in the Lokman murder case.

Popular mayor Lokman Hossain was gunned down inside Narsingdi Awami League office on November 1. He won two gold medals as the best mayor.

Joydebpur in Gazipur and Delwar from Ghoradia in Narsingdi.

With this arrest, the number of arrestees in this case rose to 12.

Son of Abdul Hai Dakat (robber), Sharif is also known as Killer Sharif as he is a professional killer, claimed police, adding that he is also cousin to Joynal Abedin Sarkar alias Joynal Dakat, former chairman of Baghaba union parishad of Shibpur in Narsingdi.

Sharif is also accused in a number of murder cases, said police.

Mamunur Rashid Mandal, investigation offi-

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EC skirts split-DCC polls

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election commissioners Sohul Hussein and Sakawat Hussain echoed CEC's view.

However, the commission will continue the preparatory work so that the next EC can move ahead with the polls plan immediately after taking office, Shamsul Huda said.

He also brushed aside the idea of conducting the polls together with the new commission.

"We know no example of an election being jointly held by an outgoing and an incoming commission. For this reason, we won't hold the polls in this manner."

When his attention was drawn to the legal bindings to hold the polls within 90 days, the CEC said, "What can we do now? We were not consulted before the changes in the law."

Amid widespread criticism and protests, parliament on November 29 passed the bill splitting the DCC into two and intro-

duced the provision for holding the city polls within 90 days. The House took four minutes and a few seconds to pass the bill.

President Zillur Rahman signed the bill into a law on December 1.

Protesting the split, BNP enforced a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the capital on December 4. The main opposition party also said it would re-unify the DCC when voted to power.

After the changes took effect, city mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, also a BNP leader, and all of its councilors automatically lost their posts.

In line with the changes, the government appointed two administrators on December 4 to run the two city corporations until mayors and councillors are elected.

However, the commission's decision yesterday indicates that the tenure of the administrators will be extended.

UN rights body to leave Nepal despite concerns

AFP, Kathmandu

The United Nations said yesterday its rights watchdog is to leave Nepal at the request of the government, sparking fears that war crimes committed during a 10-year insurgency could go unpunished.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was set up in Nepal six years ago during the brutal conflict, but the period for which it had been granted permission to stay ended last week.

"Any OHCHR country office comes by an invitation of the host country. Nepal decided that the presence of OHCHR-Nepal is no longer needed and decided not to extend the mandate," Chun Gurung, a spokesman for the rights body, told AFP.

Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists said in a joint statement that the OHCHR was needed to drive through human rights commitments made in the peace deal signed in November 2007.

Three bridges

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that no negligence in works of authorities concerned would be tolerated.

Weighing machines would be set up at the entrances of Meghna Bridge on December 17, the minister said, adding that ferry service on Meghna River would be provided for overloaded vehicles.

These machines would be gradually set up on other important bridges including Kanchpur and Gumti, he said.

Meanwhile, authorities of Bangabandhu Bridge have started weighing trucks and carriers that seem to be overloaded.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, the communications minister said repair works of the three risky bridges would start soon.

On construction of much-talked-about Padma Bridge, Quader, also a member of the ruling Awami League, said the construction of the bridge would start within the tenure of the present government.

The communications minister said within a day or two he would physically visit Bangabandhu Bridge and other bridges to see their conditions and to oversee the use of weighing machines.

SC wants

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the Anti-Corruption Commission to explain why the proceedings against Khaleda should not be scrapped.

The ACC had filed the case on July 3 the same year against Khaleda, her son Tarique Rahman and five others with Ramna Police Station in connection with embezzling more than Tk 2.10 crore by forming a 'fake' organisation, Zia Orphanage Trust.

A seven-member Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice Md Mozammel Hossain yesterday passed the order and assigned the HC bench led by Justice Khandker Musa Khaled to dispose of the rule after hearing arguments from the lawyers concerned.

It also disposed of a petition filed by Khaleda challenging an HC order that rejected her no-confidence plea in an HC bench.

Khaleda filed the petition with the SC on December 8 after the HC bench led by Justice Md Anwarul Haque on November 30 had rejected her petition which said that she might not get justice from the bench.

Barrister Rafiqueul Huq and barrister Moudud Ahmed appeared for Khaleda. Attorney General Mahubub Alam represented the government while advocate Anisul Huq and advocate Khurshid Alam Khan argued for the ACC.