Rampant abuses in Somali capital evictions: Amnesty

AFP, Mogadishu

The forced eviction of thousands of Somalia's poorest from makeshift camps amid rebuilding efforts in the warravaged capital Mogadishu has led to "large scale" rights abuses, Amnesty International warned yesterday.

More than 300,000 people live in basic camps across Mogadishu, often in the ruins of once grand buildings and consisting of little more than plastic sheeting or cloth draped over stick frames.

But since Al-Qaedalinked Shebab fighters fled city trenches two years ago, bands of labourers have been rebuilding Mogadishu, with the vast tented camps being cleared for development.

Some residents have been forced to shift to often dangerous areas on the city outskirts, outside the effective control of security forces, Amnesty added.

"It is completely unacceptable for people who have fled to the capital for protection to be forcibly evicted,' said Amnesty's Somalia researcher Gemma Davies.

"It has resulted in large scale human rights abuses."

Thousands of people have long lived amid the ruins of the seaside capital, which became a byword for anarchy after the collapse of the government in 1991, but tens of thousands more flooded the city two years ago fleeing extreme drought and famine.

"For decades, Somalia's people have been pushed from place to place by conflict, famine and drought,' Amnesty said.

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border illegally with her mother and elder brother.

Her mother, whom her father had abandoned, made the decision to cross the Indian border with the children in search of a livelihood, said sources in BGB.

The trio made it safely past the border and sought refuge at a relative's house in Delhi. There Afroza's mother fell ill. Unable to make headway with the situation, she later that very year decided to come back home.

However, luck did not favour them on the return journey through the Siliguri border. Heavy rains made the trespassing difficult and they got caught in the hands of the BSF, said BGB sources.

"On October 13, 2009, Afroza and her mother were sent to a jail in Murshidabad, while her brother was transferred to a children's home," said the sources, adding that Afroza's brother was later sent back to Bangladesh. But the sources could not say when and how her brother was sent back.

However, things took a turn for the worse when Afroza's ailing mother passed away failing to take the burnt of imprisonment.

BGB Director General Maj Gen Aziz Ahmed told The Daily Star, "The BSF special delegation will hand the girl over to me."

BGB sources said the girl's maternal grandmother would be her guardian henceforth. Meanwhile, BGB would contact rights organisations to give Afroza's custody.

3 of a family

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Zahura and Sima around 11:00pm.

Faruk, who was rescued unconscious with head injuries, died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) around 11:30pm, said Anwar Hossain Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of

Phulbaria Police Station. The little boy was staying with his grandparents as his parents work in a garment factory in Dhaka, he said.

Police detained a person for interrogation but are yet to know the motive behind

the killing. The bodies were sent to

MMCH morgue for autopsies.

Eurozone finance ministers meet on crisis

Bailouts, recovery on agenda

AFP, Vilnius

Eurozone finance ministers met yesterday, exuding more confidence as the bloc returns to growth, but still mindful that bailed-out member states must meet their targets amid speculation some need more help.

The eurozone finally escaped a deep 18-month recession in the second quarter but the cost in millions of lost jobs and economic stress remains a major concern.

Among the larger econo-

mies, France in particular is struggling for sustained growth and EU Economic Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn said Paris had to do more to get back on track, especially on its high labour costs. France "has made prog-

ress but there is still much more to be done in restoring competitiveness," Rehn said as he went into an informal meeting of the 17 eurozone finance ministers in Vilnius.

French Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici said he "always talked of his country and its reforms with pride," arguing that its 0.5

percent growth in the second quarter put it at the forefront of the recovery.

The reforms pushed through by the Socialist government "are very impressive," he said.

On the agenda for the talks, to be expanded later to include the EU's non-euro states, is what to do about twice-bailed out Greece given the now widespread acceptance it needs a once taboo third rescue, probably for 10 billion euros (\$13.3 billion), to bolster its finances. Ministers will also look

closely at Ireland, whose rescue programme ends this year and is hoping for support as it returns to traditional financing via the markets. Portugal meanwhile has run into serious problems

after key parts of its rescue programme were ruled illegal, leaving the government desperately trying to find other ways to balance the books.

third easing in its 2014 public deficit targets -- to 4.5 Product (GDP) from the of the financial system."

tougher 4.0 percent.

Jeroen Dijsselbloem, who heads the Eurogroup of finance ministers, said he thought it was "important to stick to what we have agreed ... including the deficit target.

"I dont think it is a good signal to keep the discussion alive, whether the target should be more or less. The outside world should understand that the Portugese government is committed to what has to be done, what has been agreed." Cyprus meanwhile awaits

approval of the next tranche of a very controversial rescue which saw creditors, shareholders and larger depositors forced to pay to wind up one of its largest banks. Slovenia faces a similar problem of a banking sector

run wild, with its lenders at risk as boom has turned to bust in recent years. Last week, Brussels approved Slovenia state aid On Wednesday, Lisbon worth more than one billion

called for what would be a euros for two small banks, Factor Bank and Probanka, on the basis it was "necespercent of Gross Domestic sary to preserve the stability

AL hatching plot FROM PAGE 16 BNP Chairperson Khaleda to be united against the people will resist its bid to Zia's release from jail. Without reinstating the

come to power again," he said.

He made the comments at a discussion organised by Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal, women's wing of the BNP, at a hotel in the capital to mark its 35th founding anniversary and the sixth year of

non-party caretaker government system in the constitution, Fakhrul said, no election would be held in the country. The BNP would stand in the way if the government tried, he added.

He called upon people crisis if it failed.

government, saying time for preparing for the antigovernment movement was short. Ousting the government should be the party's main objective, he stressed, adding that democracy would face a

Son shot dead

FROM PAGE 1

Dhaka Medical College Hospital only to be declared dead. A bullet had pierced the right side of his body, said morgue sources.

Police also found an empty cartridge on the bed.

Champa, domestic help of the family, told this correspondent that the attackers had first entered her room, where she was sleeping with husband and three young

children. "All of us woke up and my children started crying. The criminals told me to

calm the kids and tied the he could not say for sure clothes. One of them kept an eye on us while the rest went to other rooms." Later, she saw the gang

leave through the balcony door and exit the compound by scaling up the boundary wall at the rear of the one-storey house. Latif's uncle Mir Ahsan

added the assailants had entered the house the same way. The four-foot boundary wall, right beside the main road, was easy to scale.

The deceased's father said

hands of my husband with whether all the doors were locked. Some locals said they saw

a truck loaded with earth was parked close to the boundary wall around the time of the incident. They suspect the attackers might have used the truck to escape.

Rafiqul Islam, officer-incharge of Jatrabari Police Station, told The Daily Star that they were probing to know who was the real target -- Bakhtiar or his father.

UN chief confirms Syria gas attack

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yesterday to hammer out the details of a Russian plan that emerged this week.

The last-minute Russian initiative caused US President Barack Obama to back away from planned military strikes in response to the chemical attack, which Washington blames on the regime and says killed about 1,400 people.

At the United Nations, Ban lashed out at Assad and said UN inspectors will publish an "overwhelming report" that chemical weap-

ons were used. He said the Syrian leader had "carried out many crimes against humanity" and insisted there had to be "accountability" once

Syria's civil war is over. In Geneva, Washington and Moscow said they hoped the chemical weapons talks would open the door to wider efforts to end Syria's conflict, which has claimed more than 110,000 lives since March 2011.

Kerry said he would meet Lavrov again later this month -- probably around September 28 -- to try to set a date for a long-delayed peace conference.

Moscow were "working hard to find common ground" to get peace talks going in Geneva that would bring together Assad's regime and the opposition.

Much of the way forward "will obviously depend on the capacity to have success here in the next day, hours, days, on the subject of the chemical weapons," Kerry told reporters after meeting with Lavrov and the UN-Arab League envoy to Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi.

Lavrov said he also hoped a "basically abandoned" peace plan first agreed in Geneva in June last year

would be revived. New York in the margins of the (UN) General Assembly and see where we are, and what the Syrian parties think about it and do about

it," Lavrov said. Meanwhile, the French table. presidency said that France, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan had agreed to give more help to the Syrian opposition in its battle against Assad.

After a meeting in Paris, French President Francois Hollande and foreign ministers from the three countries "agreed on the need to strengthen international support for the democratic opposition to allow it to face attacks by the regime," Hollande's office said in a

statement. Kerry, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius and British Foreign Secretary William Hague would hold further talks on Syria in Paris on Monday.

He said Washington and first time Thursday that Syria planned to relinquish its chemical arms, and Russian President Vladimir Putin urged the global community to take him seriously.

"This confirms the serious intentions of our partners to go along this path," Putin said at a security summit in Kyrgyzstan.

documents at the United Nations seeking to join the international convention banning chemical weapons and said it now considers

itself a full member. A UN spokesman yesterday said the organisation has asked Syria for more information about its appli-"We agreed to meet in cation, but he declined to say what was missing from

the documents filed. Washington has warned the regime that further steps will be needed before military action would be off the

France -- Washington's main backer on military strikes -- also said that Syria had not yet not done enough, calling for a binding UN Security Council resolution that would authorise force if Assad does

not give up his arsenal. Fuelling concerns about Assad's sincerity, reports emerged yesterday that a secret Syrian military unit was scattering the chemical weapons stockpile around the country.

The unit was given responsibility to shift the The presidency said arsenal of poison gases and munitions to different locations across Syria, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing US and Middle Eastern officials.

Russia has not revealed Assad confirmed for the many details of its plan, but Russian media report that it calls for a four-step process for the weapons handover.

Reports say the plan calls for Damascus to join the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), declare the locations of its chemical arms, allow OPCW inspectors access and finally Syria on Thursday filed arrange for destruction of the arsenal.

A spokesman for the Hague-based OPCW said it will meet next week to examine Syria's request.

Steam seen at Fukushima as experts dismiss water fears

AFP, Tokyo

Vapour has begun rising again from a reactor at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, more than two-and-ahalf years after its core melted down, the site's Japanese operatorsaid Friday.

Tokyo Electric Power said it believed the steam was coming from a puddle sitting atop the reactor and was not dangerous, but it has not been able to clarify why vapour started appearing occasionally from July this year. TEPCO said the

plant remained stable, with sensors in and around it showing no increase in levels of radioactivity being released. The steam appeared as TEPCO found more evi-

Fukushima Daiichi nuclear

dence that radioactive waste water at the plant was contaminating groundwater that is on its way to the sea.

Thousands of tonnes of

reactors to tame the meltdowns sparked by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

TEPCO says their temperature is now stable but they need to be kept cool with water to prevent them running out of control again.

pany with a large and growing amount of radioactive water in temporary storage tanks, some of which have leaked and very likely contaminated groundwater. TEPCO and Japanese

filtering out radioactive particles, but face opposition from fisherman and neighbouring countries. US nuclear experts, hired by the utility to offer advice,

into the Pacific Ocean after

But the company must

water were poured on the engage the public in mean-

1974 and 1985. This is leaving the com-

Nuclear Regulatory Commission, who now leads TEPCO's reform committee, said the water cannot stay in the tanks forever. But media portrayals of officials are considering public health risks at releasing some of the water

plans to sensibly deal with the water, Barrett said. Some facilities such as heavy water reactors routinely release certain radioactive said if done properly, the materials into the environrelease into the sea can be done ment without posing signifi-

"The water is an

extremely sensitive public ingful ways about its plans matter. People are rightly in order to ease health and concerned about that. Now environmental worries, said the levels are so low that Lake Barrett, a former US they shouldn't be as concerned as they are," Barrett official who worked on the clean up of the Three Mile told a press conference. Island accident between "The perceived aspects of

Barrett and Dale Klein, really is from a technological, engineering, scientific former chairman of the US point of view," he said. Klein and Barrett said TEPCO has been slow to inform the public what actions it was taking at

Fukushima. The radioactive water Fukushima have been "out spillages reported so far do of proportion" and have not pose significant public health risks, the two men said but have weakened the public's confidence in

the water far exceeds what it

TEPCO. "I think from my perspective, TEPCO takes five steps forward and then two steps back. When you take those steps back, it's very frustrating," Klein said.

Failure in Geneva meet draws flak FROM PAGE 1 the plight of workers in The brands, however, those brands who had not

by the International Labour

Organisation (ILO) representative.

Eleven of the brands and retailers sourcing from the factories affected by the Tazreen and Rana Plaza disasters joined the highlevel compensation meetings, said IndustriALL in a statement. For discussion on the

collapse of Rana Plaza, a total of 29 brands were invited, but only nine attended.

Delta Apparel, Dickies, Disney, El Corte Inglés, Edinburgh Woolen Mill, Kik, Li & Fung, Piazza Italia, Sean John, Sears, Teddy Smith, and Walmart did not participate in the September 11 meeting.

IndustriALL Assistant General Secretary Monika Kemperle said: "The disregard of the absent brands for

Bangladesh whose lives have been destroyed by the avoidable accidents at Tazreen and Rana Plaza is shocking in the extreme. Empty promises and direct untruths since the Tazreen fire and the Rana Plaza collapse all so that these Western multinationals can avoid making payments that amount to a minute percentage of turnover." For Rana Plaza,

\$74,571,101 would be needed to provide full compensation to all workers, of which the brands are being asked to contribute \$33,556,996. For Tazreen \$6,442,000 is required, with \$2,899,000 being asked from the brands. IndustriALL said

Bangladeshi workers and victim's families hoping for immediate aid would be disappointed.

agreed to meet again within the next two weeks to share information and tools, exchange views, and consider next steps, said the statement. They also agreed to con-

tribute financially to a fund

to assist injured workers and

victims' families, and com-

mitted to move the process

helped generate fears over

cant health risks, he said.

of establishing the fund forward quickly. Immediately after the meeting, Primark committed to providing a further three months salary to all affected families as emer-

gency relief.

stantial compensation initiative" for the victims of the Tazreen factory fire, mentioned the global trade union. Campaign's Ineke

Zeldenrust said it would

The C&A set out a "sub-

amounts needed to provide the workers and their families with the compensation they are entitled to under international standards. Sirajul Islam Rony, president of Bangladesh National Garment Workers

Employees League, was

optimistic about getting

vet committed to immedi-

ately and actively engage in

the negotiation process and

commit to providing suffi-

cient funds to meet the

compensations. "International brands will not be able to evade their responsibilities in regard to factory tragedies in Bangladesh as the whole world is watching," he told

The Daily Star. Md Abdul Hannan, Clean Clothes Bangladesh's permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva, continue to put pressure on attended the meeting.

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