

Widodo calls for calm after arrest of top graft fighter

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesian president Joko Widodo urged the national police and the country's most powerful anti-graft agency to avoid "friction" after the arrest of a prominent corruption fighter sparked an outcry yesterday.

The shock arrest of Bambang Widjajanto, deputy chief at the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), comes about a week after the agency accused a high-ranking police general of corruption, postponing his appointment as the country's new police chief.

Hundreds of activists gathered for a noisy protest outside the KPK headquarters in Jakarta, claiming Widjajanto's arrest for allegedly interfering in a legal case was police acting out of revenge.

Indonesia's millions of social media users called on Widodo, who made combating corruption a cornerstone of his leadership, to speak out with #WhereAreYouJokowi just trailing #SaveKPK as the top mentions on Twitter.

The president, speaking after meeting with the KPK chairman and deputy police chief, urged both parties to act objectively.

"As head of state I also asked the national police and KPK not to let friction occur when performing their duties," Widodo told reporters.

Earlier national police spokesman Ronny Sompie said Widjajanto could face seven years in prison if found guilty of the allegations.

He was accused of ordering witnesses to give false evidence during a 2010 constitutional court challenge to a local election result, Sompie added.

"We have enough strong evidence of his suspected involvement in the case," he said.

Sompie insisted the investigation was focused on Widjajanto and unrelated to the KPK, an institution that has butted heads with police in the past.

The KPK this month launched a corruption investigation into three-star general Budi Gunawan, who just days earlier had been named the sole pick for national police chief by Widodo.

The president refused to revoke Gunawan's nomination, but later postponed his appointment until the KPK investigation was complete.

At the protest outside KPK headquarters, demonstrators were adamant Widjajanto's arrest was retaliation for the Gunawan case.

"The arrest was symbolic of what is happening. The police are trying to kill the KPK," 26-year-old lawyer Veronica Koman told AFP.

It'll be govt's

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discussion in parliament's Thursday session, several MPs described the violence during the BNP-led alliance's ongoing blockade and hartals as "acts of terrorism", and demanded Khaleda's arrest and trial on those counts.

Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Abdul Matin Khasru, Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Chief Whip ASM Firoz of the AL; Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu and Kazi Firoz Rashid of the JP; and independent lawmakers Hazi Muhammad Selim and Nixon Chowdhury, among others, took part in the discussion.

Nixon Chowdhury even walked out of the House protesting at not arresting Khaleda for "masterminding killings". So far, 30 people have died in the anti-government programmes since January 6.

The BNP leader also lambasted State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal for saying legal ways were being considered for arresting Khaleda.

"Under the current management, any legal step will mean the gradual implementation of the prime minister's orders," he said.

Taking a dig at Sheikh Selim for his adverse remark on Khaleda in parliament, Rizvi said, "Selim said Khaleda Zia would be tried in public only to please his sister Sheikh Hasina."

He also criticised the government for its directives on the media to "spread only the government messages to people."

Meanwhile, Peshajibi Parishad, a pro-BNP platform, yesterday announced to hold human chains across the country on January 27 demanding a national election under a non-party administration.

At a programme at the Jatiya Press Club, Ruhul Amin Gazi, the platform's acting convenor, made this announcement.

Gazi also claimed yesterday that the BNP Chairperson was inclined to hold talks if the government initiated meaningful steps for a dialogue.

"I am ready to sit for talks if the government takes meaningful initiatives for a dialogue," Khaleda Zia was quoted as saying by Gazi.

Gazi said this while briefing reporters after more than a hour-long meeting with Khaleda at her Gushan office.

28 burnt in city

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[the leaders] will never understand our sufferings because their family members don't need to travel on buses like we do."

At the DMCH emergency, victims were seen groaning in pain as they waited in queue for their turn to be treated. Doctors primarily used anti-burn cream before bandaging the affected parts of the body.

Relatives were also seen moving two to three victims on a single stretcher. Some, finding no stretcher, carried victims by themselves and ran for the hospital's emergency.

The DMCH called in 15 doctors and eight nurses in addition to those on duty to tackle with the emergency situation.

Two passengers saved themselves from being burned by jumping off the running bus, suffering minor injuries.

One of them was Al Amin, 27, who was travelling with his father, two uncles and a friend. They boarded the

Rupganj-bound bus from Gulistan.

He saw two boys aged around 12 to 14 were standing by the street holding two lit Kupis (lantern) when the bus slowed down a bit drop a passenger in Konapara Kather Pool area around 9:30pm.

"The first bomb landed on the seat just behind me, breaking through the closed glass window, as soon as the bus drove past the boys," he said.

Al Amin jumped out through the window, suffering minor injuries. His friend Rafiq, 27, father Mannan Sarder, 60, and uncles Muzaffar Molla, 60, and Shahjahan, 60, suffered burns.

The only woman victim, Syeda, claimed the second bomb descended just near her seat and exploded.

Locals rushed to the scene seeing the flames and police and ambulances too arrived.

Around 2:00am today, Jatrabari police said they were yet to arrest anyone in this connection.

Not jobs

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Agency sources also said workers were discouraged to go outside the camp boundary for reasons of security although there was no fighting going on in the city at the time.

Contacted, officials at the Bangladesh embassy in Baghdad corroborated the agency's claim.

Asked about the workers' refusal to join the new job offered by the agency, engineer Siddique expressed his reluctance to stay in Iraq any more. "I am fed up with the agency here. I just want to go back home," he said.

As the workers' ordeal continued without any immediate solution, they wrote a letter to the Bangladesh embassy in Iraq on December 31 last year to resolve their problem by sending a team from Dhaka.

"We are requesting you [Ambassador] to send a team from Dhaka to resolve our problem. The decision whether to stay in or leave Iraq should be solved through individual worker's choice," read the letter signed by Siddique on behalf of the workers.

Maj Gen Rezanur Rahman Khan, Bangladesh ambassador to Iraq, said he had received the letter and forwarded it to the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry on January 1 this year.

"We have tried to resolve the issue by arranging jobs for the workers. But they didn't agree and demanded a team from Dhaka visit them here," he

told The Daily Star over the phone on January 19.

The ministry however has yet to take any decision about sending a team to Najaf, said Kazi Abul Kalam, deputy secretary (employment wing) of the expatriates' welfare ministry.

The authorities of the recruiting agency and the embassy officials alleged that Rights Jessor, an NGO working with migrant workers' rights, had been provoking the workers not to join the new company.

"Our foremost priority was to ensure jobs for all and we did it for them despite facing an unexpected delay. But the chief of the NGO is deliberately standing in the way of a smooth solution of the matter," said Amin.

Binoy Krishna Mallick, the chief of Rights Jessor, however, denied the allegation.

"The recruiting agency in Dhaka and the Bangladesh embassy officials in Iraq are violating the workers' rights over the last eight months in the name of providing them with jobs. They are not interested in resolving the issue," he told The Daily Star.

Over 20,000 Bangladeshis are now working in Iraq. Currently, the strife-torn Middle Eastern country is not issuing any manpower clearance to hire workers from Bangladesh, according to the embassy officials.

Two Greenland lagoons

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extending inland from the coast.

One of the lakes has filled and emptied twice in the last two years, according to researchers at Ohio State University and Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, who published their findings in the journals *Nature* and *The Cryosphere*.

Ian Howat, associate professor of earth sciences at Ohio State University, believes that the finds add to a growing body of evidence that meltwater has started overflowing the ice sheet's natural plumbing system and is causing 'blowouts' that drain lakes away.

The fact that our lake appears to have been stable for at least several decades and then drained in a matter of weeks - or less - after a few very hot summers, may signal a fundamental change happening in the ice sheet,' Professor Howat said.

Another lake, measuring 3km was discovered by a team from Cornell University.

Using Nasa data, they calculated that the lake has filled and emptied twice since 2012 - at one point, experiencing a 'blowout' that drove water from the lake at a volume of 57,000 gallons (215 cubic metres) which is the equivalent to a 30 by 50 ft swimming pool, every second.

Co-author of the study, Michael Bevis, said that this repeated filling and refilling is troubling.

Each time the lake fills, the meltwater carries stored heat along with it, which reduces the stiffness of the surrounding ice, making it more likely to flow out to sea, he explained.

If enough water is pouring down into the Greenland Ice Sheet for us to see the same sub-glacial lake empty and re-fill itself over and over, then

there must be so much latent heat being released under the ice that we'd have to expect it to change the large-scale behaviour of the ice sheet,' he said.

Professor Howat's team came across a cratered lake last year, which is 31 miles (50km) inland from the southwest Greenland coast. It measures 1.2 miles (2km) across and 230 feet (70 metres) deep.

Aerial and satellite images revealed that a sub-glacial lake had existed at the site for more than 40 years, while recent images suggested that it probably emptied through a meltwater tunnel beneath the ice sheet in 2011.

The lake would have held around 6.7 billion gallons of water, but disappeared in a single season, with Professor Howat describing the sudden drainage as 'catastrophic'.

He suspects that as more meltwater reaches the base of the ice sheet, natural drainage tunnels along the coast are cutting further inland.

The tunnels carry heat and water to areas that were once frozen to the bedrock, potentially causing the ice to melt faster.

He explained: 'Some independent work says that the drainage system has recently expanded to about 50 kilometres inland of the ice edge, which is exactly where this lake is.'

It is possible that the lake was tapped by one of the invading tunnels and that thousands of similar lakes dot Greenland's coast.

Researchers are not entirely sure how the lakes, which are hard to detect with radar, form and know relatively little about what is happening under the ice in the region.

Rosetta reveals new details about comet

AFP, Washington

The European Space Agency's Rosetta probe, which sent the Philae lander onto a comet's surface in November, has revealed unexpected details about these celestial balls of ice, dust, and rocky particles.

In eight papers published in the journal *Science* yesterday, researchers describe what they have learned about Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko since the 100-kilogram (220-pound) Philae

landed on it November 12 after a 10-year trek piggybacking on Rosetta.

High-definition images taken by the spacecraft show how the nucleus consists of two lobes, connected by a neck region, which some have described as a "rubber-ducky" shape.

The images have been combined to form a three-dimensional model of the comet and its topography where Philae landed.

Local people doused the flames with water and sand. None of the bus passengers were hurt, said police.

MALAYSIAN WORK PERMIT Renewal time extended until Feb 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Malaysian immigration authorities have extended the work permit renewal date of foreign workers from immigration counters to February 28.

During the time, MyEG's online renewal service would also be available, said Malaysian Immigration Director General Mustafa Ibrahim yesterday.

"The temporary re-opening of the counter service for the work permit renewal is to allow more time for employers to familiarise themselves with the online system," he said, reports The Star Online, a Malaysian English daily.

"The decision whether the service at immigration counters will continue will be taken at the end of February," the official said at a programme in Putrajaya of Malaysia.

On January 1, the Malaysian government introduced the online services for the work permit renewal.

Mustafa said there would be no change in the service fee, 38

Malaysian Ringgit, charged by MyEG for the renewal procedures.

Around four lakh Bangladeshis are now in Malaysia.

Thousands gather for funerals of murdered Myanmar teachers

AFP, Myitkyina

Thousands of mourners gathered yesterday for the funerals of two young teachers who activists allege were murdered by soldiers in northern Myanmar, as the government promised an inquiry into their deaths.

Tearful well-wishers packed into a hall in Myitkyina, the state capital of war-torn northern Kachin state, to pay respects to the pair, whose deaths have sparked an outpouring of public anger and grief.

Crowds massed around the coffins of the two women, which were draped with white sheets, in a solemn procession led by a Kachin orchestra.

The violent deaths have struck a bitter chord for many in Kachin state, which has been wracked by conflict between the army and ethnic minority rebels in recent years.

"We demand safety for women. We are not safe in this country," Mar Mar Cho, an activist with the Women's Organisations Network of Myanmar, told AFP.

The battered bodies of the women were discovered early this week when students visited their house in a remote village near the border town of Muse in northern Shan state, worried that they had failed to turn up for morning lessons, according to state-backed media.

JCD man

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With this, four people, three JCD leaders and a Jamaat leader, were killed in such "shootouts" with law enforcement agencies after the BNP-led alliance enforced the nationwide blockade since January 6.

Jisan stood accused in at least 50 criminal cases, including killing, abduction and extortion, filed with different police stations, said Humayun Kabir, officer-in-charge of Chandarganj Police Station in Laxmipur.

According to police, Jisan led a criminal gang named after him. However, his maternal uncle Abdul Alim said all the cases filed against the JCD leader were politically motivated, reports our Noakhali correspondent.

"Jisan was picked up and shot dead for his political connections," he claimed.

Around 1:45am yesterday, a patrol team of Rapid Action Battalion-11 signalled Jisan to stop at Jigatola on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway when he was returning to Laxmipur from Dhaka by motorcycle, said Anamul Haque, a sub-inspector of Daudkandi Police Station, a correspondent of Daudkandi adds.

"As he did not stop, another team of the Rab tried to intercept Jisan. He then fired two shots at the elite force. The Rab men were compelled to fire back," the police official said.

Anamul said Jisan was hit by bullets and died on the spot around 4:00am.

The police official claimed a pistol, a bullet and a motorbike were recovered from the spot.

Kazi Rokeya Begum, a member of Chandarganj Union Parishad, said Jisan was active in BNP politics and allegedly involved in criminal activities.

2 Shibir cadres

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a good beating before police reached the spot and found the Shibir men lying unconscious by the roadside.

Local people doused the flames with water and sand. None of the bus passengers were hurt, said police.

Yet another bloody day

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With 70 percent burns, he was first admitted to