



A man throws a stone on a burnt car as supporters of Kenya's opposition party National Super Alliance (NASA) demonstrate in Kisumu, yesterday. Inset, President Uhuru Kenyatta supporters hold a picture of him after Kenya's Supreme Court validated the poll victory of Kenyatta.

PHOTO: AFP

Violence in Kenya after polls verdict

Two killed as SC upholds Kenyatta win

AFP, Nairobi

Kenya's Supreme Court yesterday validated the election victory of President Uhuru Kenyatta, sparking opposition protests that left two dead, according to police.

While the court decision led to celebrations in ruling party strongholds, protesters took to the street in opposition areas in the capital and the west of the country.

One protester was killed in Nairobi's Kibera slum, while a paramedic tending the injured at a demonstration in western Migori was also shot dead, according to police.

The death toll from four months of election chaos now stands at 54, with most protesters killed at the hands of police, according to rights groups.

The protests erupted after the Supreme Court dismissed two petitions seeking to overturn the victory of Kenyatta in October 26 elections, paving the way for him to be sworn in for a second five-year term on November 28.

"The court has unanimously determined that the petitions are not merited. As a consequence, the presidential election of 26 October is hereby upheld as is the election of the third respondent," said Chief Justice David Maraga, referring to Kenyatta.

Maraga had in September annulled an August election due to "irregularities and illegalities", a historic decision hailed across the globe as an opportunity to boost Kenyan democracy.

However, the ruling – a rare victory for Odinga – only deepened acrimony and protests, leaving the country deeply divided.

Accusing the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) of failing to make fundamental reforms to improve the vote, Odinga withdrew from the October ballot which he urged his followers to boycott. The boycott handed Kenyatta a landslide victory of 98 percent, although turnout was only 39 percent.



We have secret ties with 'many Arab states' Says Israel minister

AFP, Jerusalem

An Israeli cabinet minister said on Sunday that Israel had covert ties with "many" Arab and Muslim states but was obliged not to name them at the other sides' request.

A rare interview given by the head of Israel's armed forces to a Saudi-owned news site was published on Thursday, further fuelling talk of close links.

It followed previous broad hints by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and accusations by Hezbollah that Saudi Arabia was pushing Israel to attack the Lebanese Shiite group.

"We have ties, some of them secret, with many Arab and Muslim states," Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz told Israeli army radio on Sunday.

"Usually the one who wants those ties to be discreet is the other side," he said in response to a question about ties with Riyadh.

"We respect the wishes of the other side when contacts are developing, whether it is with Saudi Arabia or other Arab or Muslim countries."

Although Saudi Arabia and Israel have no official diplomatic relations, they share a common enemy in Iran, with both seeking to limit the Islamic republic's expanding influence in the Middle East.

Tensions between the Saudis and Iran have intensified in recent weeks, with Riyadh-backed Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri saying he is stepping down over what he called Iran's grip on his country.

TEHRAN'S 'AGGRESSION' AGAINST ARAB STATES

Saudi, allies vow response

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday dismissed as "worthless" a resolution by Arab League foreign ministers that accused the Islamic republic of "aggression" against Arab states.

"The solution to the region's problems, many of which are down to Saudi Arabia's sterile policy, is not to publish such worthless statements but to stop following the policies of the Zionist regime (Israel) which seeks to stoke divisions," the ISNA news agency quoted foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghassemi as saying.

On Sunday, the Arab League held an extraordinary general meeting in Cairo, at the request of Saudi Arabia, as tensions soar between the regional arch-rivals, including over League member Lebanon.

In Beirut, Arab League chief Ahmed Abul Gheit yesterday said Lebanon should be "spared" from spiralling regional tensions.

Riyadh had called Sunday's meet-

ing to discuss "violations" by Tehran.

Ghassemi also described the Arab League's statement as "untrue" and urged Saudi Arabia to "immediately stop its savage aggression against the Yemeni Arab people" and "stop its pressure on Lebanon, Qatar and the entire region".

He accused Riyadh of "following

Iran ridicules 'worthless' Arab League stance
Arabs agree to response together to 'violations by Iran'

the policy of the Zionist regime... that seeks to divert attention from the main issue, namely the occupation of Palestine".

Sunday's League resolution issued "strong condemnation" of a November 4 missile attack by Huthi rebels in Yemen and targeting Riyadh, saying it was "blatant aggression against the kingdom and a threat to

Arab national security".

Saudi Arabia and its allies accuse Iran of backing the Shiite Huthis, an allegation Tehran denies.

The League ministers affirmed Riyadh's right to defend its territory and said they would support all legitimate procedures it might take "against these Iranian violations".

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir had earlier warned that Riyadh "will not hesitate to defend its national security to keep its people safe".

Sunni Muslim Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran have had no diplomatic ties since January 2016 and back opposing sides in several regional conflicts, including the wars in Yemen and Syria, as well as the Lebanese issue.

Saudi-Iranian tensions have escalated over Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri's shock announcement on November 4 that he would resign, in a statement from Riyadh in which he cited Iran's "grip" on his country and threats to his life.

N Korean women suffer discrimination, rape: UN

Pyongyang says working for equality but blames sanctions

REUTERS, Geneva

North Korean women are deprived of education and job opportunities and are often subjected to violence at home and sexual assault in the workplace, a United Nations human rights panel said yesterday.

After a regular review of Pyongyang's record, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women voiced concern at rape or mistreatment of women in detention especially those repatriated after fleeing abroad.

North Korean women are "under-represented or disadvantaged" in tertiary education, the judiciary, security and police forces and leadership and managerial positions "in all non-traditional areas of work", the panel of experts said.

Domestic violence is prevalent and there is "very limited awareness" about the issue and a lack of legal services, psycho-social support and shelters available to victims, it said.

North Korea told the panel on Nov 8 that it was working to uphold women's rights and gender equality but that sanctions imposed by major powers over its nuclear

and missile programmes were taking a toll on vulnerable mothers and children.

The panel said economic sanctions had a disproportionate impact on women.

North Korean women suffer "high levels of malnutrition", with 28 percent of pregnant or lactating women affected, it said.

The report also found that penalties for rape in North Korea are not commensurate with the severity of the crime, which often goes unpunished. Legal changes in 2012 lowered the penalties for some forms of rape, including the rape of children, rape by a work supervisor and repeated rape.

Women trafficked abroad and then returned to North Korea, "are reportedly sent to labour training camps or prisons, accused of 'illegal border crossing', and may be exposed to further violations of their human rights, including sexual violence by security officials and forced abortions," it said.

North Korean women living in China can transmit their nationality to their children, but many are believed not to register them "for fear of being forcibly repatriated", it said.

DRIVE BY CORRUPTION ERADICATION COMMISSION

Indonesia speaker taken into custody

REUTERS, Jakarta

Indonesia's parliament speaker, Setya Novanto, has been taken into custody by the anti-corruption agency after being arrested over his alleged role in causing state losses of \$170 million linked to a national electronic identity card scheme.

Novanto, clad in an orange vest worn by detainees of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), was transferred from a hospital on Sunday night into a KPK detention facility.

He is one of the most senior politicians to be detained by the agency, popular among ordinary Indonesians for targeting members of the establishment suspected of abuse of power.

Novanto was arrested on Friday night but his detention was postponed while he received treatment for injuries suffered in a car crash the day before.

Novanto will be held for 20 days for questioning, said KPK spokesman Febri Diansyah. He will be detained in a sparsely-furnished holding cell with some mattresses and a shared toilet.

Novanto has denied wrongdoing but has repeatedly missed summonses for questioning by the agency in recent months, saying he was ill and needed heart surgery.



Yemeni children protest against the air strikes carried out by the Saudi-led coalition on UN's Universal Children's Day in front of the UN offices in the capital Sanaa, yesterday. The banner in Arabic reads: "The aggression destroyed our schools so that we do not learn."

PHOTO: AFP

Sonia slams govt's arrogance

CWC sets ball rolling for Rahul to be Congress chief

TIMES OF INDIA ONLINE

Congress president Sonia Gandhi yesterday tore into the Narendra Modi government for its "arrogance", for "locking the temple of democracy" and for "destroying the future of the poor", reported ANI.

Her first two criticisms related to the delay in the Winter Session of parliament. The Congress has said the Centre was using the upcoming state Assembly polls in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh as an excuse to avoid facing Parliament.

"The Modi government in its arrogance has cast a dark shadow on India's Parliamentary democracy by sabotaging the Winter Session on flimsy grounds. It's mistaken if it thinks by locking the temple of democracy, it'll escape constitutional accountability ahead of elections," said Sonia at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee she chaired at her

residence yesterday.

When referring to the Centre "destroying the future of the poor", the Congress president was talking about demonetisation and the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The Congress Working Committee meeting was called yesterday to decide on the schedule of party elections. Rahul Gandhi's elevation is now all set, with election for the post of president announced for December 16 and counting of votes scheduled for December 19.

The party said that notification for the post of Congress president will be issued on December 1, while nominations will have to be filed on December 4. In case there is no candidate apart from Rahul Gandhi, the Congress will announce his candidature on the last date of scrutiny, which is December 5. Rahul Gandhi is expected to be the only candidate in the fray, sources said to PTI.



China envoy ends North Korea trip

AFP, Beijing

A Chinese special envoy yesterday ended a four-day trip to North Korea during which the two sides discussed regional concerns but made no direct statements about the nuclear crisis.

Officially, Song Tao was sent by President Xi Jinping to report on the outcome of the Chinese Communist Party's recent congress.

Analysts had expected that Song would press North Korean officials on the nuclear standoff, but did not expect any breakthroughs.

The trip came a week after US President Donald Trump urged Beijing to do more to rein in its Cold War-era ally, warning that time was quickly running out to resolve the crisis.

Iraq top court says Kurdish referendum unconstitutional

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq's top court yesterday declared the Kurdish north's independence referendum in September to be unconstitutional, firing a new salvo in the political crisis with the autonomous region.

The legal move marked the latest stage in the dispute between Baghdad and Kurdish regional capital Arbil sparked by the referendum, which resulted in a resounding "yes" vote for independence in the Kurdish area.

A statement said the Supreme Court "rendered a decision declaring unconstitutional the referendum held on September 25, 2017 in Iraqi Kurdistan... and cancelling all the consequences and results".

Last week, as the deadline announced by the court for its decision on the constitutionality of the referendum approached, the Kurdistan government said it "respected" the decisions taken by Iraq's highest court.

It also said it respected a previous decision on Article 1 in the constitution insisting on Iraqi unity, which could be a basis for dialogue.

Yesterday, the court again cited this article in its ruling, saying that the holding of the Kurdish independence referendum "contradicts and contravenes it", its spokesman Ayas al-Samuk said in the statement.

Parliament in Baghdad is currently reviewing the federal budget for the coming year, including the allocation for the Kurdish region.

There was no immediate response to yesterday's ruling from the Kurdish authorities.

Last month, the UN Security Council urged the Iraqi government and regional leaders in Kurdistan to set a timetable for talks to end the crisis.

The world body's appeal came after Baghdad dismissed an offer from Iraqi Kurdish leaders to freeze the outcome of the referendum and hold talks. Rejecting the freeze offer, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi instead demanded the annulment of the independence vote.

September's referendum was initiated by Barzani, for whom the repercussions were severe.

NEWSIN brief

Indian president visits Arunachal

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday criticised a visit by Indian President Ram Nath Kovind to the remote state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims, saying China opposed any activities by Indian leaders in disputed areas. The latest row over Arunachal Pradesh suggests the Asian giants remain far apart, despite recent attempts to defuse tension over a region that China claims as southern Tibet.

Palestinian factions in Cairo for unity talks

AFP, Gaza City

Leaders of various Palestinian factions headed for the Egyptian capital Cairo yesterday ahead of talks aimed at moving forward with a reconciliation agreement. Senior figures from 13 different political factions -- including Gaza's rulers Hamas and the West Bank-based Fatah -- are due to meet today for three-day talks, with potential topics of discussion including the formation of a new unity government.

51 teachers arrested over Turkey coup links

REUTERS, Istanbul

Turkish authorities yesterday issued arrest warrants for 107 teachers for suspected ties to the US-based cleric Ankara blames for orchestrating last year's coup, the Dogan news agency said. Fifty-one of the teachers were detained in Ankara after the local prosecutor issued the warrants, Dogan said, adding that operations continued to round-up the remaining teachers.