

NEWSIN brief

Kenya's HC suspends media shutdown

Kenya's High Court ordered authorities to allow three major broadcasters to temporarily resume service yesterday, after they were switched off for covering the opposition leader's mock inauguration, prompting outrage over press freedom violations. The three private stations are Citizen, NTV and KTN.

FSB kills IS member plotting polls attack

Russia's FSB security agency said yesterday it had killed an Islamic State jihadist in the provincial city of Nizhny Novgorod as he was plotting an attack during next month's presidential polls. The FSB said the man "was ready to carry out a sabotage and terrorist attack on the day of presidential elections" on March 18.

Jailed Catalan leaders appeal to UN panel

Three Catalan leaders imprisoned in Spain over their role in their region's independence crisis will take their case to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, their lawyers said yesterday. "Their detention by Spain is an affront to human rights, designed to prevent them from performing their role as political representatives" lawyer Emmerson said.

Japan fire kills 11 at home for the elderly

Eleven people were killed in northern Japan after fire broke out at a home for elderly people with financial difficulties, police said yesterday. The victims -- eight men and three women -- were among 16 residents of the facility in Sapporo, Hokkaido.



Police from the explosive ordinance disposal unit hose down a defused US-made bomb dropped during World War II a day after it was discovered on a harbour front construction site in the Wan Chai district of Hong Kong yesterday.

CRISIS IN INDIAN JUDICIARY

CJ makes public SC judges' roster

Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra has made public the assignment of cases in the Supreme Court and has also decided that he will take up all public interest petitions, weeks after four judges called an extraordinary press conference to accuse the top judge of allocating "sensitive cases" to junior judges.

The Supreme Court roster for judges has been made public for the first time in the shadow of a rift after the Chief Justice was publicly criticised by four judges who are senior most after him - Justices Jasti Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, MB Lokur and Kurian Joseph.

The new roster system will begin from Monday and will apply to new cases. The Chief Justice will hear all PILs or Public Interest Litigation and cases related to elections, criminal cases, social justice cases and the appointment of constitutional functionaries.

Justice J Chelameswar, the number two judge of the Supreme Court, who called the media to his home for the January 12 press conference targeting the Chief Justice, will hear cases related to labour, indirect taxes, criminal cases and consumer protection.

Justice Ranjan Gogoi, who is tipped to be the next Chief Justice, will hear cases related to labour, indirect taxes, crime, personal law and religion.

Justice Madan Lokur has been assigned cases about ecology, consumer protection, mines and minerals, personal Law, armed forces and paramilitary forces.

'Death to Pakistan' Protest in Kabul as Afghan officials press Islamabad over recent spate of attacks that killed over 100

REUTERS, Kabul

Demonstrators yesterday protested outside the Pakistani embassy in Kabul as senior Afghan officials said they had handed over evidence connecting insurgents based in Pakistan with a recent spate of attacks that killed well over 100 people.

The protest, in which dozens of people burnt flags and chanted, "Death to Pakistan", was not large, but it came during a period of heightened tension in the Afghan capital following two major attacks in the past two weeks.

Yesterday, Interior Minister Wais Barmak and Masoom Stanekzai, head of the NDS intelligence service, returned from a visit to Islamabad, where they had pressed Pakistani authorities to move against Taliban leaders based in the country.

"We provided Pakistan with documents about Taliban operating centres inside Pakistan and we expect Pakistan to act against them," Barmak told a news conference in Kabul. However, he declined to provide details on the information provided, citing the need to keep operational intelligence secret while investigations continued.

A Pakistani security delegation is due to visit Kabul today to continue the discussion, which comes as the United States has cut off some aid to Pakistan over what it calls its failure to crack down on militants attacking in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has long accused Pakistan of providing safe haven to Taliban and other insurgents, a charge Pakistan denies, pointing to the thousands of casualties it has suffered from militant violence over the years.

Last month, the Taliban claimed two major attacks in Kabul, one on the Intercontinental Hotel, which killed more than 30 people and a second that killed more than 100 people when an ambulance packed with explosives blew up on a crowded street.

The attacks in the heavily protected city centre fuelled fresh worries about the Western-backed government's ability to provide security and combat the Taliban insurgency.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's government has extended the stay of Afghan refugees in the country for 60 days, a shorter-than-recommended time that revives fears Islamabad is preparing a forced return of hundreds of thousands of violence-plagued Afghanistan.

Afghan officials hand over proof connecting militants based in Pakistan extends Afghan refugees' stay for 60 days

VIOLATION OF MYANMAR'S OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT

Myanmar court denies bail to Reuters journos

AFP, Yangon

A Myanmar court yesterday denied bail to two Reuters journalists charged under a secrecy act that could see them face up to 14 years in jail, in a case that has sparked outcry over shrinking media freedom.

Myanmar nationals Wa Lone, 31, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 27, are accused of possessing classified documents thought to relate to the violent military crackdown on the Rohingya Muslim minority.

The campaign in northern Rakhine state has forced nearly 700,000 Rohingya Muslims over the border into Bangladesh since August, many carrying allegations of rape, mass murder and arson at the hands of Myanmar's army. "The court has decided not to give them bail,"

judge Ye Lwin told the Yangon court of charges under the colonial-era Official Secrets Act.

The bail decision was crucial as pre-trial hearings are expected to drag on for several months before the court officially decides whether to take on the case or not.

The pair are now expected to remain in jail throughout that period. Meanwhile, a man threw a petrol bomb at the lakeside Yangon compound of Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday, officials said, a rare attack on a national figurehead who enjoys strong domestic support but has drawn global outcry over her reticence to speak up for the Rohingya.

There was little damage caused by the attack, Kyi Toe, an official from her National League for Democracy (NLD) party wrote in a Facebook posting.

Petrol bomb thrown at Suu Kyi's lakeside villa in Yangon



Military option not close

Says US envoy, welcomes dialogue between two Koreas

AGENCIES

A US special envoy said yesterday all options remain on the table for solving the nuclear standoff with North Korea but that he did not think the military option was close.

Joseph Yun, speaking to reporters in the Japanese capital, said the United States was seeking a peaceful resolution of the crisis and diplomacy was its preferred option.

"Our policy is very much for the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis. We've said over and over again that what we want to see is dialogue," Yun said.

"Having said that, we also have said that all options are on the table and by all options, it has to include military options," he said. "I don't believe we are close to it."

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has refused to give up development of nuclear missiles capable of hitting the United States in spite of increasingly severe UN sanctions, raising fears of a new war on the Korean peninsula. The North has fired test-fired missiles over Japan, reported Reuters.

Yun was speaking a day after US President Donald Trump, branding North Korea's leadership "depraved", said that Pyongyang's pursuit of nuclear missiles could "very soon threaten" the American homeland and vowed to prevent that.

N KOREA TENSIONS

Second Taiwanese man probed over secret North Korea oil sales

North's figure skating pair arrives in South

selling oil to North Korea, prosecutors said yesterday, as their probe into the illicit sanctions-busting trade widens, reported AFP.

The UN Security Council imposed three sets of sanctions on North Korea last year in response to the reclusive state's nuclear and missile tests, including restrictions on oil sales.

But the US has said companies with ties across Asia were violating those sanctions, including by transferring oil to North Korean vessels at sea to avoid detection.

CONTEMPT PETITION

Pakistan court issues notices to Sharif, aides

PTI, Lahore

The legal woes of Pakistan's ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his family mounted on Wednesday when a top court issued notices to them for allegedly committing contempt of court during a rally in Punjab province last week.

The Lahore High Court issued notices to the federal government, Election Commission of Pakistan and the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) to submit their reply by February 14.

Petitioner Amina Malik told the court that Sharif, his daughter Maryam, son-in-law Capt (retd) Muhammad Safdar, Interior Minister Talal Chaudhry and Punjab law minister Rana Sanaullah verbally attacked the Supreme Court judges on last Saturday's rally in Jaranwala for disqualifying Sharif from the office of prime minister.

Italian town sells home for 1 euro

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A deadline has been introduced to a scheme in Sardinia that offers the chance to buy a house for €1.

The Italian village of Ollolai in the Barbagia region launched the initiative in 2015 to attract more residents after the local population had dwindled to 1,300, with few babies born each year.

The mayor, Efsio Arbau, aimed to rejuvenate the community via the innovative programme, which invites people to buy one of 200 stone houses for just €1 (88p) - although there are strings

Advertisement for Bangladesh Bank Recruitment Commission. Includes logo, address, contact info, and a detailed recruitment table with columns for job title, qualifications, and salary. The table lists various positions like 'বেতন স্কেল', 'শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা', and 'বয়স' with their respective requirements and pay scales.

Advertisement for B-R POWERGEN LTD. Includes company logo, address (House: 39, Road:12, Sector: 04, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230), contact info (Memo No: 27.31.0000.200.45.001.136, Date: 01.02.2018), and details of an amendment to tender documents for a power plant project. It also lists the company secretary (Md. Khurshed Alam).