



Physically challenged Yemenis demonstrate during a protest against air strikes the day before the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in front of United Nations' office in Sanaa yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

KHASHOGGI KILLING

Erdogan takes Saudi prince to task

AFP, Buenos Aires

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan demanded Saturday that Saudi Arabia extradite suspects in the killing in Istanbul of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, taking to task the kingdom's crown prince who was basking in his quick return to the world stage at the G20.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's presence at the summit of the Group of 20 powers in Buenos Aires demonstrated he was firmly in control, as he met with Western leaders and sealed an oil pact with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

But the Turkish leader, also attending the G20, was visibly cooler toward the 33-year-old prince and on Saturday directly criticized him for the first time over the killing of Khashoggi, a royal confidant turned critic.

Saudi Arabia has said that 21 people are in custody and vowed to keep probing the killing of Khashoggi, who was killed and dismembered after visiting the kingdom's Istanbul consulate to handle paperwork for his planned wedding.

"It's essential that these people are tried in Turkey in order to eliminate any question marks that the international community may have," Erdogan told reporters in Buenos Aires.

"Whoever has ordered and implemented this violent crime should be found out at once. Unless the perpetrators are found out, the whole world and the Islamic community shall not be satisfied."

Erdogan said the Saudis have refused to help Turkish prosecutors with information on the whereabouts of Khashoggi's body and the identities of accomplices said to have supported the visiting Saudi hit squad.

The Islamist-oriented Turkish leader, who has been vying for influence in the region with Saudi Arabia, said he did "not wish to cause any damage" to the royal family.

But he criticized Prince Mohammed, saying that during the summit the Saudi heir apparent gave an "unbelievable explanation" on Khashoggi's killing.

The prince told world leaders that "unless the crime is proven, you cannot blame Saudi Arabia," Erdogan quoted him as saying.

"Of course, that might be valid from a legal point of view," Erdogan said. "But his own officials have admitted that this was a planned operation."

Erdogan said that only one G20 leader -- Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau -- raised the journalist's killing in the full summit.

Erdogan said that he himself did not bring up the case as time ran out in the session.

Both French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Theresa May said they raised the Khashoggi case during private meetings with the crown prince, with Macron overheard on an open microphone telling him, "You never listen to me."

Canada has been outspoken on human rights in Saudi Arabia, which has retaliated by breaking off diplomatic relations and vowing to end trade.

But US President Donald Trump has said that it does not matter if the crown prince ordered the killing of Khashoggi, who lived near Washington, because the kingdom is a major buyer of arms, supplier of oil and opponent of Iran.

In a nod to growing criticism at home on Saudi Arabia, Trump only exchanged "pleasantries" with the crown prince, according to the White House.

But Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with his Saudi counterpart in Buenos Aires, and again defended the US embrace of the crown prince.

"There's no direct evidence linking him to the murder of Jamal Khashoggi," Pompeo told CNN.

Several US news reports say that the CIA has concluded that the crown prince ordered the killing, even if there is no "smoking gun" evidence.

The Wall Street Journal, quoting the CIA assessment, said Saturday that Prince Mohammed sent at least 11 messages in the hours before the killing to a close adviser charged with overseeing the murder.

Criminals

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at least 10 people were injured in a clash between AL and BNP activists at the district's Sarishabari upazila around 11:00pm on Saturday.

The clash erupted at a Baul concert when AL men began chanting slogans against the BNP. During the clash, three motorbikes were torched, three shops were vandalised, and a chase and counter-chase took place, said locals and witnesses.

Mazedur Rahman, OC of Sarishabari Police Station, said they were investigating the incident.

Our correspondents from Sylhet and Jamalpur contributed to the report.

Tigers maul

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against England in 2016. His nine wickets, across two innings on the third day, was also the best by a Bangladeshi in a single day.

As Bangladesh's big first innings total proved, the pitch was not a Banfield, but none of West Indies' top-order batsmen had gotten that particular memo.

The 22-year-old Shimron Hetmyer -- who was alone in displaying the fearsome characteristics of great West Indian batsmen past -- was the only tourist to show any aptitude for batting against spin. He scored 34 in West Indies' first innings of 111 -- the lowest total by any team against Bangladesh in Tests -- and followed that up with a blistering 92-ball 93 which included nine sixes and one four. He actually hit eight sixes before a single four was struck in the second innings, which showed how well Bangladesh's arsenal of spinners had bowled to the fields set for them.

Mehedi, however, stood head and shoulders above the rest and even had the measure of Hetmyer. He dismissed the talented youngster, whom he had locked horns with in age-level cricket, in all four innings of the series. Shakib, meanwhile dismissed opposite number Kraigg Brathwaite in both innings, and Tajjul Islam -- who went wicketless in the first innings -- joined in on the fun by picking up three wickets for 40 runs in the second innings yesterday.

He blamed the government for "creating some factions of armed groups in the region for its own interest."

Addressing the discussion, noted rights activist and CHT Commission Co-chair Sultana Kamal said the peace accord had not been implemented fully because those who were supposed to implement it did not want to do so.

Blaming the two major political parties for this, she said one party did not even want to accept the accord while the other one, which was involved in the signing, had gradually distanced itself from implementing it.

Chairing the discussion, noted columnist Syed Abul Maksud said the key issue of the peace accord was to empower the region's people and without it the pact would be useless.

He also called upon the country's major political parties to make time-bound pledges in their election manifestos over implementation of the accord.

Polls mean

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He said, as a chairman, he was entitled to a national flag-bearing car and there was also a national flag in his official residence due to his position.

"The chairman [of the Chattogram Hill Tracts Regional Council] does not have power even more than a police constable posted in the CHT region or a soldier," he added.

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Trade war ceasefire

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cooperation," said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Under the agreement, Trump is shelving a plan to raise existing tariffs of 10 percent to 25 percent from the start of next year.

Xi avoids further immediate pressure on China's slowing economy, while Trump -- hit by the US Democrats' congressional win in last month's mid-term elections -- can ease damage to agricultural US states that export to China, particularly the key soybean crop.

"This was a rare opportunity for China because (the mid-terms) made Trump a lame president," said Beijing-based political consultant Hua Po.

"So at this time it was acceptable for China to maintain some bottom lines while making some major concessions."

But Brad Setser, a former Treasury official and now senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, told Bloomberg much remains to be done.

"The hard part is finding the basis for a real deal that settles the broader issues rather than agreeing on a pause," Setser said.

The truce is only partial. Some \$50 billion worth of Chinese imports already face 25 percent tariffs, while the 10 percent tariffs -- which target a massive \$200 billion in goods -- will also remain in effect.

Meanwhile, China has targeted \$110 billion worth of US imports for tariffs.

If there is any further retaliation, Trump has warned, he will slap punitive duties on the remaining \$267 billion in Chinese goods coming to the United States.

And Saturday's truce also contained an ultimatum.

The White House made clear that the 10 percent tariffs would still leap up to 25 percent if China doesn't meet

US demands in 90 days.

These include China stopping a host of trade barriers, intellectual property theft and other actions that Washington say make fair trade impossible.

Tough negotiations lie ahead, but Trump was upbeat.

"This was an amazing and productive meeting with unlimited possibilities for both the United States and China," he said in a statement.

STEAKS AND HIGH STAKES The meeting -- featuring a menu of sirloin steak, caramel rolled pancakes and Argentine wine -- went on longer than scheduled.

And while it may have been tacked on to the end of two days of G20 diplomacy, it was in many ways the main event of the weekend.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who was also attending the G20, spoke for many when she urged progress.

"We all realize that we are indirectly influenced by the fact that Sino-American economic relations are not running as smoothly as a world order needs," she said.

PERSONAL CHEMISTRY FACTOR On the US side at the dinner, Trump was accompanied by advisers such as Larry Kudlow and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who are widely seen as wanting a deal.

But hawkish advisers like Peter Navarro and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer were also present.

Trump, as often in his diplomatic dealings, appears to consider his personal chemistry with Xi the most important factor in the success of the negotiations.

He has prided himself on building a good relationship with the Chinese leader, even though he acknowledges it may have trouble surviving the growing crisis.

At the dinner, Trump said his ties to Xi were "a very primary reason" for considering a deal possible.

To catch a 'Bullet'

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On July 8, 2014, Rapid Action Battalion arrested Bullet and three others on the charge of the gun attack on Awami League central leader AKM Enamul Hoque Shameem.

Shameem was shot twice in the left hand on June 19 of the year, near the capital's Dhanmondi area. Addressing a media briefing at the time, Rab said Bullet had admitted during interrogation that he was hired for Tk 20,000.

DB officials said after Bullet's release from jail a year and half ago, he established the mugging group.

Hailing from Gopalganj, Bullet came to Dhaka in 1997 with his mother and was admitted to VK Aftab Government Primary school in Tejkunipara, where he continued his studies till third grade.

However, he stopped his academic pursuit in 2004 and started working at a potato storehouse in Karwan Bazar.

While working there, he got engaged in petty theft, cutting sacks carrying potatoes, rice and onions of different storehouses and then stealing those.

During this time, in an unspecified incident, one of his friends, Rafiq, was killed and Bullet was sent to a correction centre in Gazipur after his arrest, according to law enforcers.

After coming out of there in 2006, Bullet stepped into the criminal world and started working as a hired shooter.

sioner of DB police, told The Daily Star yesterday that they first arrested Rubel in a mugging case and interrogated him about a missing phone.

At the time, the law enforcers did not know who they would end up pursuing.

Rubel informed police that he had no information about the phone but his boss Bullet might have an update, he said.

Using the lead, police later arrested Bullet, who is wanted in a number of cases filed with Dhanmondi and some other police stations in the capital, said Sahadat.

During interrogation, Bullet told investigators that shooting or killing people had become harder in recent months and so he had returned to mugging, said a high official of DB police.

The official, requesting anonymity, said Bullet had set up a big mugging gang in just one and half years and controlled the city's Farmgate and Karwan Bazar.

Bullet told investigators that his group members used to mug people using different techniques -- on motorbikes, using firearms or by snatching cell phones after cutting the roofs of CNG-run auto-rickshaws, said the official.

"Bullet used to pay different amounts from Tk 500 to Tk 1000 or more to his group members for the mugging activities," the official added.

'Drug dealer'

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based on a tip-off, a Rab team raided a house at Shahidnagar around 4:30am. When a Rab official knocked on the door, someone inside the house began firing. When Rab men retaliated, a "gunfight" ensued.

When Rab later entered the house, they found the bullet-hit body of Rabiul Hasan. He was taken to Narayanganj General Hospital, where doctors declared him dead, he said.

He added that Rabiul's body was kept in Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy.

Rab constables Alam and Al-Amin were also injured in the incident, Alep Uddin said, adding that they were given first aid treatment.

The law enforcers claimed to have recovered a pistol loaded with four rounds of bullets and 2,500 yaba pills from the spot.

Police take over

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The factions -- one loyal to Indian scholar Maulana Saad Kandhalvi and the other to Maulana Zubair -- faced off on Saturday over control of the venue for holding a five-day Jor Ijtema, a gathering organised ahead of the two-phase Bishwa Ijtema.

Saad played a key role in Tabligh affairs in the past. However, there was an exception early this year as the Shura members in India and Bangladesh have become sharply divided over his alleged controversial statements.

The faction led by Maulana Zubair opposed the nomination of Saad as Ameer and even compelled the government to keep him away from the last Ijtema.

Qawmi madrasa-based Hefajat-Islam reportedly backs this faction.

Holding a press conference at a city hotel, Mufti Anamul Hoque, a representative of the Zubair faction, said pro-Saad Tabligh men attacked them and beat them up indiscriminately, injuring several hundred madrasa students and Tabligh men.

He demanded arrest of the attackers in 24 hours, compensation and treatment of the injured and immediate steps to hold the Ijtema in the scheduled time in mid-January.

They also demanded banning some leaders (Murubbi) of their rival faction from Kakrail Mosque and urged the authorities concerned to hand over the venue to the committee of Tabligh like before.

The faction is going to submit a memorandum to the district administration today to press home its demands.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sheykh Al Mursalin, a pro-Saad Tabligh man, said thousands of followers of Maulana Saad on Saturday gathered near the venue premises to hold the Jor Ijtema as per an announcement during last Ijtema.

"They did not allow us to enter the venue and first threw brickbats at the peaceful gathering from the rooftop of the toilets. We were more than a lakh, while they were only several thousand. We were attacked but did not hit them," he said.

Mursalin added their rivals have no acceptance in the Tabligh community and that is why they launched the attack with the assistance of Hefajat.

The Saad faction would hold a press conference today at Dhaka Reporters Unity to describe the situation and place their demands.

America mourns George HW Bush

AFP, College Station

Flags flew at half-staff across the United States on Saturday as Americans prepared for a week of solemn tributes to George HW Bush, in his home state of Texas and in the US Capitol, a day after the former president died at age 94.

Tributes poured in from world leaders in memory of the 41st US president, who guided America through the end of the Cold War and launched the international campaign to drive Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait.

Many of those same leaders are expected to attend Bush's state funeral next week, alongside President Donald Trump and his wife Melania. Trump was notably absent from the funerals of the statesman's late wife Barbara, and of veteran fellow Republican John McCain.

Although the two Republican presidents were in many ways polar opposites -- the soft-spoken, patrician Bush reportedly once dismissed the blustering New Yorker as a "blowhard" and even voted for his rival Hillary Clinton -- Trump paid the late leader a gracious tribute, saying he had "inspired generations of his fellow Americans to public service."

"His accomplishments were great from beginning to end," Trump tweeted.

Declaring a national day of mourning for December 5 -- when the federal government and New York Stock Exchange will close in Bush's honor -- Trump also signaled his respect by calling off a press conference planned at the G20 summit in Buenos Aires.

The days-long national farewell to Bush will begin today with a commemoration in Houston, where the Bushes lived for years and where he died on Friday surrounded by friends and family.

From there, Bush's casket will travel to Washington on board Trump's presidential aircraft -- in what the US leader called "a special tribute that he deserves very much."

The former president will lie in state in the US Capitol ahead of a state funeral at the towering National Cathedral, expected to draw dozens of dignitaries from around the world.

Bush's remains will travel back to Texas on Wednesday, where he

will lie in repose at St Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston with a funeral service the next day preceding his interment at the George Bush Presidential Library in College Station. He will make his final journey aboard a funeral train.

At the presidential library on Saturday, people came to sign the memorial book in Bush's honor, or lay flowers at the feet of his statue.

Chris Griffin, a student at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University who helped organize a candlelight vigil Saturday, said: "I think his legacy is really what inspires all of us."

Bush was a decorated World War II pilot, diplomat and onetime CIA chief who saw his son George follow in his footsteps to the Oval Office -- making them only the second father-son duo in American presidential history, after John and John Quincy Adams.

From former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to current heads of state, leaders praised Bush both for his strength and his moderation, as well as the commitment to internationalism typified by his assembling of a global coalition to oust Iraqi invaders from Kuwait in 1991.

Jimmy Carter, now the oldest surviving former US president, said Bush's administration "was marked by grace, civility and social conscience."

Britain took the rare step of lowering flags in government buildings.

Gorbachev called him "a true partner" in winding down the Cold War, and French President Emmanuel Macron mourned the loss of a leader who "strongly supported the alliance with Europe."

Suffering from Parkinson's disease, Bush had been wheelchair-bound and in failing health. He is survived by his five living children and 17 grandchildren.

Former secretary of state James Baker recounted anecdotes from his longtime friend's final days to The New York Times.

He said Bush's last words were to the younger George, who was put on the speaker phone to say goodbye, saying he had been a "wonderful dad" and that he loved him.