



PHOTO: AFP

Sudanese protesters gather during a demonstration outside the Central Bank in Khartoum, yesterday. Hundreds of workers at Sudan's banks and government offices, including the key oil ministry, went on strike for a second day yesterday to demand the country's ruling generals step down.

World's second EPR nuclear reactor starts work in China

AFP, Paris

A next-generation EPR nuclear reactor in China has carried out its first chain reaction, French energy giant EDF announced yesterday, becoming the second using the much-delayed European technology to reach the milestone.

The fission reaction at the Taishan 2 reactor on Tuesday follows the Taishan 1 becoming last year the first of its kind to advance to the operational stage.

"The nuclear reaction was authorised and yesterday the Chinese reactor carried out a fission reaction

for the first time," EDF chairman and CEO Jean-Bernard Levy told Europe 1 radio on Wednesday.

EDF, which helped design the European Pressurised Reactor (EPR), is a minority shareholder in the Taishan project, which is a joint venture with China's state-run CGN and regional Chinese utility Yuedian.

The first nuclear fuel was loaded into the Taishan 2 reactor in early May in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong.

Levy said that Taishan 1, which in December became the first EPR to enter into commercial service, was

"working very well".

The two EPR reactors at the Taishan nuclear power plant will be the most powerful in the world when fully completed and will be able to supply five million Chinese users, the companies have said.

EPR reactors -- which use a pressurised water design -- promise advances in safety and efficiency over conventional reactors while producing less waste.

But EDF has faced serious problems rolling out the technology and has managed to sell just a handful of the reactors as construction problems piled up.

President arrives in New Delhi

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Minister AKM Mozammel Haque, among others, are accompanying Hamid.

During the three-day visit, Hamid will also pay a courtesy call on his Indian counterpart Ram Nath Kovind.

Kovind has appointed Narendra Modi as prime minister after the landslide victory of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in India's recently concluded national election.

Modi was appointed as the PM for

a second consecutive term, soon after the NDA leaders on Saturday elected Modi as their leader in parliament, according to official sources.

Hamid will return home on May 31.

Zia's 38th anniversary

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Chittagong Circuit House on May 30, 1981.

Born on January 19, 1936 in Bogura's Bagbari, Zia was a sector commander during the Liberation War.

BNP and its associate bodies have drawn up a 10-day programme (May 22 to May 31) to observe the day.

As part of the programme, the party arranged a discussion in the

capital's Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, yesterday.

The party flag will be hoisted at half-mast and black flags will be hoisted at its Nayapaltan central office and all other BNP offices across the country.

Party leaders and activists, led by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, will place wreaths at Zia's grave at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar around 10:00am.

Jatiyatabadi Ulema Dal will hold a milad on the premises of Zia's grave.

Doctors' Association of Bangladesh will arrange a free medical camp at BNP's Nayapaltan office while Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal will arrange a photo exhibition at the Jatiya Press Club in observance of the day.

BNP leaders will distribute iftar items and clothes among the destitute at different parts of the city.

CCTV cameras

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on May 26, they said.

The explosion in Gulistan left two traffic constables and a community police member injured. A female Assistant Sub-Inspector and two others were wounded in the Malibagh blast.

Hours after both the explosions, SITE Intelligence Group, an American company that tracks online activity of white supremacist and jihadist organisations, said the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Asked if militants were involved in the blasts, DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia on Tuesday said, "This cannot be said right now... we have to consider both local and international aspects during the investigation."

Meanwhile, analysing footage of other CCTV cameras near the blast scene in Malibagh, investigators said they suspected that five to six people directly took part in the attack.

"With a backpack, a youth aged between 25 and 28 reached the spot in a rickshaw. Three more youths were seen walking in front of him while two to three others were following them," said another official involved in the probe.

The official, who requested anonymity, said they suspected that after getting down from the rickshaw, the youth walked to the vehicle and planted the bomb half an hour before the blast that occurred at 8:49pm.

Later, the youth was seen walking towards the Shantinagar intersection, the official said, adding they were trying to detect and arrest the culprits.

The other suspects left the scene in a bus together. Investigators were trying to trace their location and identity, said CITC officials.

The investigators also suspect that someone was keeping an eye on the spot for a couple of days before the explosion. That individual informed the other suspects about the vehicle being unattended.

In both the Malibagh and Gulistan incidents, the attackers used almost similar bombs. Both the IEDs had batteries attached to them, a technique used by militants. But in Malibagh, they used a timer, a small number of splinters and a special kind of chemical, said investigators.

CITC officials said the bomb in Gulistan went off just after a traffic policeman sat near the scene. It suggested that the attackers had reced the area and their accomplices were around it. The bomb in Malibagh also went off when the female police member went near the vehicle.

"However, it seems the attackers did not want to cause massive destruction. Rather, they wanted to create panic among police," said an investigator.

"Collecting footage of nearby CCTVs, we are now trying to find out how the cameras around the scenes were damaged days before the attacks and who are responsible for their maintenance," the official told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

Asked about the types of explosives used in Malibagh and Gulistan, CITC Additional Deputy Commissioner Rahmatullah Chowdhury said they were yet to receive the forensic report. "So, I cannot comment on it," he said.

Yesterday, DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia said he hoped police would be able to identify the attackers, their motives as well as learn about the ingredients used in the crude bombs.

He said primarily it seemed the

bomb was an "improvised cocktail" and police were the target.

He also said the bomb attack on the police van in Malibagh was carried out as part of a "conspiracy" to weaken police morale.

A vested quarter has been plotting against police members, who discharge their duties with professionalism and courage in dealing with incidents of terrorism, militancy and narcotics, he said.

He also said the law enforcers have also heightened security at the key points of the capital and are ready to tackle any untoward situation.

Fresh 'war crimes'

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Army spokesman Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun denied all allegations, saying the military's operations were within the law and they "avoided harming civilians".

"This was an operation to clear terrorists. We were careful not to commit any war crimes," he told AFP.

Amnesty also criticised the government for choosing to "remain silent" while supplies of medicine, food and humanitarian relief remain blocked by authorities.

In an unprecedented move after the AA attacked police posts in January, Aung San Suu Kyi's government ordered the army to "crush" the rebels.

The government spokesman could not be reached for comment.

Although the military was the main perpetrator, AA insurgents have also "committed abuses against civilians", Amnesty said, alleging they have sent letters with bullets to local administrators and business people.

"I can firmly say it does not happen," AA spokesman Khine Thu Kha told AFP by phone, denying the claims.

Eid journey

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Shahidul Alam, OC of Bangabandhu Bridge West Police Station.

"We will make a proper plan for the deployment of law enforcers. Besides, we will stop reckless driving and violation of traffic rules, which caused tailbacks stretching from the western side of Jamuna Bridge to Hatikumrul and Nokla in the previous years," the OC told The Daily Star.

There were gridlocks at the western side of the bridge during the previous Eid holidays.

Ahsanul Kabir Pavel, assistant engineer at the BBA site office in Tangail, said they would install two more toll booths on the bridge before the Eid. Presently, there are six booths at either side of the bridge.

THREE UNDERPASSES OPENED With the opening of three underpasses on the Dhaka-Tangail highway on May 25, suffering of passengers and transport workers have eased largely.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened the underpasses in Gharinda, Mirzapur and Deohata areas through videoconferencing from the Gono Bhaban.

Rasel Miah, driver of a three-wheeler auto-rickshaw which runs from Tangail town to Gharinda Railway Station, said he can now cross the highway using the underpass within a few seconds. Previously, he had to spend at least five to 10 minutes at the busy intersection in Gharinda to cross the road.

The area saw many road accidents over the years as it was very risky to cross the road. Besides, managing traffic was also quite difficult.

Sajedul Islam, a traffic inspector in Tangail, said they had struggled to manage the traffic at the intersection, especially during the Eid holidays. But after the opening of the underpasses, it has become easy for them.

Virus-packed

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deadly infectious diseases: "I LOVE YOU" from 2000, "Sobig" of 2003, "MyDoom" (2004), "DarkTequila" (2013), "BlackEnergy" (2015), and the most notorious of all, the "WannaCry" ransomware from two years ago.

It is a powerful symbol of the threat on simple laptop can pose to the entire world. The six trojans, worms and malware loaded on it have caused at least \$95 billion in damage around the world, according to Guo.

Guo is an internet artist "whose work critiques modern day extremely online culture," the auction site, organized by cybersecurity group Deep Instinct, said.

The computer, viewed via an online video stream, is harmless in its auction state -- turned on, but not connected to any network or the internet.

The auction site says it is "airgapped" -- its wireless and internet connections physically and electronically plugged.

But it comes with ominous warning to the buyer not to unleash its pathogenic programs -- possible by unplugging its connection hardware, or by simply inserting a thumb drive.

The site stresses that the artwork is for research use only, saying that anyone who submitted a bid contractually agreed that they "have no intention of disseminating any malware."

At the same time, the site appeared to acknowledge that the buyer might not heed the agreement.

"Please remember that these are live and dangerous malware samples," it said.

"Running them unconstrained means that you will infect yourself or others with vicious and dangerous malware."

The buyer was not identified.

Committeeson cards

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The committees to be formed will constitute parents, teachers and people of other professions.

At upazila and district levels, government officials will be requested to join the committees.

The partner organisations will organise month-long programmes in the capital against child abuse and invite ward councillors, mayors, representatives from the police administration and the media, and influential people to participate in them.

The MJF will also conduct a research to learn where in Dhaka children are more vulnerable to rape and sexual harassment.

The government, its legislative body and those responsible for ensuring enforcement of laws have significant roles to play to stop abuse and violence against children, it said.

At the conference, Sheepa Hafiza, executive director, Ain o Salish Kendra, said, "Even trials at speedy tribunals take 26 years to complete... such prolonged trials encourage people to take the law in their own hands."

She said the criminals had to be brought to justice promptly after an incident and the trials be expedited.

They further demanded shutting down websites featuring pornography and foreign channels which broadcast violent videos.

Drug abuse is well connected to sexual violence as, speakers said, people lose their sense of right and wrong after taking drugs. The home ministry has to take steps to stop supply and consumption of drugs.

Orders should be issued to all educational institutions to form anti-harassment committees as per a 2009 High Court directive which ordered forming such committees in every educational institution and workplace to deal with complaints of sexual harassments, conduct investigations and make recommendations.

The NGOs also demanded that the education ministry incorporate in textbooks lessons about sexual violence and recommended the information ministry to screen documentaries to raise awareness.

"We want to wage a movement against child abuse and sexual harassment," said Shaheen Anam, executive director of the MJF.

Families, society and the state have to come forward to ensure the safety of children.

Charging Trump

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prevented him from bringing charges against a sitting president, telling reporters it was "not an option we would consider."

But he also said his two-year investigation did not clear Trump of improper behaviour and pointed out there were other ways to hold presidents accountable.

"The Constitution requires a process other than the criminal justice system to formally accuse a sitting president of wrongdoing," Mueller said as he announced his resignation from the Justice Department.

Democrats in Congress are debating whether to try to move ahead with impeachment, an effort that is almost certain to fall short in the Republican-controlled Senate.

The White House and several top Republicans said it was time to move on to other matters, while several Democratic presidential candidates called for impeachment.

"What Robert Mueller basically did was return an impeachment referral," Senator Kamala Harris said on Twitter.

A redacted version of Mueller's report was published in April, concluding that Russia repeatedly interfered in the 2016 election and that Trump's election campaign had multiple contacts with Russian officials, but did not establish a criminal conspiracy with Moscow to win the White House.

Mueller's report declined to make a judgment on whether Trump obstructed justice, although it outlined 10 instances in which Trump tried to have Mueller fired or otherwise impede the investigation.

"If we had confidence that the president clearly did not commit a crime, we would have said so," Mueller said. "We did not, however, make a determination as to whether the president did commit a crime."

Matthew Jacobs, a former federal prosecutor, said he thought Mueller was "saying in his own way that a crime was committed."

A source close to Trump said the

Mueller statement amounted to a "bad day for the home team."

"Mueller's statement today was a direct assault on the president," said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "And it will only empower the Democrats to be bolder and more aggressive in their move to impeach him."

BCL men

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done wielding hammars and wearing helmets during the demonstrations for quota reform and safe roads, he said, adding that none of the attackers had been brought to book.

"The Chhatra League told me that if I wanted to be the vice president or joint general secretary, I would be included in the central committee of the organisation. The Chhatra League's central secretary said this..."

"They told me at different times if I join Chhatra League, they would provide me with all sorts of benefits."

"Now it seems that since I didn't go with them or didn't agree to their proposal, they are attacking me. I fear for my life."

He then claimed that he had called several BCL central leaders when he was barred from holding an iftar party in Brahmanbaria.

"They assured me that they would take steps but the same thing happened the next day."

"Brahmanbaria BCL president declared that our programme would be resisted... Before going to Bogura I called local police officials and asked for security. But they said they could not help at the moment."

The BCL last night issued a press release stating that it had formed a committee consisting of its Legal Affairs Secretary Fuad Hossain and legal affairs deputy secretaries Sujjan Sheikh and Shahadul Hasan to probe into the allegations brought by Nur.

The committee is asked to visit the scenes and collect information and submit its report by three work days, said the press release.

If any BCL leaders or activists are found guilty, actions would follow, it added.

Johnson faces court

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the Brexit referendum campaign, a judge announced yesterday.

Johnson, the former foreign secretary, will be summoned to appear before a court over allegations of misconduct in public office, judge Margot Coleman said in a written decision, without specifying the date.

The case is over the claim that Britain sends £350 million (\$440 million, 400 million euros) a week to the European Union.

The exact amount of Britain's net and gross EU contributions was one of the biggest issues during the 2016 referendum campaign.

Businessmen Marcus Ball has crowd-funded the private prosecution.

Coleman's decision follows a hearing last week at Westminster Magistrates Court in London.

"The allegations which have been made are unproven accusations and I do not make any findings of fact," the judge said.

"Having considered all the relevant factors I am satisfied that this is a proper case to issue the summons as requested," she wrote.

Referring to Johnson as the "proposed defendant", Coleman said he would be required to attend a preliminary hearing that could then result in a trial.

Johnson is considered the favourite among the 11 candidates vying to replace the outgoing Theresa May as leader of the governing Conservative Party, and therefore prime minister, by the end of July.

The summons application made by Ball's lawyers alleges that Johnson "repeatedly lied and misled the British public as to the cost of EU membership" and "knew that such comments were false or misleading".

"Lying on a national and international platform undermines

public confidence in politics."

The maximum penalty for misconduct in public office is life imprisonment.

The elements of the offence are that a public officer, acting as such, wilfully neglects to perform their duty or wilfully commits misconduct to such a degree as to amount to an abuse of the public's trust in the officeholder, and does so without reasonable excuse or justification.

Johnson was not present at last week's hearing, but his lawyer Adrian Darbishire said the pro-Brexit figurehead staunchly denied acting in an improper or dishonest manner.

Coleman considered whether the case had been brought purely to annoy Johnson.

The former London mayor's position is that the application is a politically-motivated stunt as part of a campaign to undermine the referendum result, and/or to prevent its consequences.

Britain is due to leave the EU on October 31.

"I accept the defence submission that when the applicant commenced his consideration of whether to bring a private prosecution against the proposed defendant, some three years ago, there may have been a political purpose to these proceedings," Coleman said.

"However, the information for the summons was laid on February 28, 2019 and that argument in my view is no longer pertinent.

"I do not accept the application is vexatious."

In her 14-page decision, the judge said: "This is an unusual and exceptional application with a considerable public interest and it is right that full reasons are provided."