

Johnson suggests EU would bear some blame for no-deal Brexit

AFP, London

Boris Johnson, the frontrunner to be Britain's next prime minister, suggested Wednesday that the EU would bear some responsibility if he took his country out of the bloc without a divorce deal.

The former London mayor has based his campaign to replace Theresa May on a promise to deliver Brexit as planned on October 31, with or without an agreement with Brussels.

In a final campaign event in London ahead of the announcement of the winner next week, Johnson said that he would seek to negotiate new exit terms with the European Union over the summer.

But he said that if the EU refused to be flexible or compromise on the existing withdrawal agreement, "if they won't change a dot or a comma... then obviously we have no choice but to get ready to come out on different terms".

EU leaders have repeatedly said they will not renegotiate the divorce text they struck with May last year, even though it has been rejected by British lawmakers three times.

But Johnson and his rival for the premiership, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, insist they will try, notably by removing the controversial "backstop" plan to keep open the border with Ireland.

They have threatened to walk away if they fail -- tough talk that caused the pound to fall Wednesday to its lowest level against the US dollar in more than two years.

May is stepping down after failing to get her divorce deal through parliament, an effort that forced her to delay Brexit twice.

Her successor, chosen by around 160,000 members of the ruling Conservatives in a postal ballot, will be named party leader on July 23 and automatically become prime minister the following day.

Many Tory members have already voted, and opinion polls suggest an easy win for Johnson, a leader of the 2016 referendum campaign for Brexit.

South Africa graft inquiry adjourned after Zuma complaint

AFP, Johannesburg

A South African panel questioning former president Jacob Zuma over alleged graft during his time in office suspended work Wednesday after he complained that the questioning was too harsh.

"We adjourn the proceedings until Friday morning, I am confident that there are reasonable prospects that ways could be found to address the concerns by the former president," said Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, chairing the investigation.

Government officials and businessmen have been appearing before the so-called Commission of Inquiry into State Capture over the last 11 months in Johannesburg.

Previous witnesses have given damning evidence against Zuma, portraying his nine-year presidency as a time of mass looting of state assets.

US sanctions

FROM PAGE 20

go further too," she told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

"They were never going to travel to the US... let's be realistic."

Lee said the sanctions - which covered Min Aung Hlaing, his deputy Soe Win, and brigadier generals Than Oo and Aung Aung - should also be extended to two more military leaders identified in a UN investigators report in 2018.

The report, compiled by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, had called for the six generals to be tried for genocide.

Lee said reports from Myanmar in recent weeks suggested that human rights violations and abuses committed by the army and insurgents against civilian populations may be getting worse.

Last month, Lee had said the army may be committing gross human rights violations under cover of a mobile phone blackout in Myanmar's Rakhine and Chin states.

Yesterday, Lee said the blackout had left many villages unprepared for severe monsoon floods in the area.

It has also hampered disaster relief and humanitarian responses to the floods, she added.

"The question is, did the Myanmar government impose the ban to inflict more harm on the people of Rakhine?"

A 2017 military crackdown in Myanmar drove more than 730,000 Rohingya Muslims to flee to neighboring Bangladesh, according to UN figures.

UN investigators have said Myanmar's operation included mass killings, gang rapes and arson and was executed with "genocidal intent." Myanmar denies the charge.



This aerial view shows the rescue and recover scene after a fire at an animation company building in the Japanese city Kyoto yesterday. At least 33 people were killed in a suspected arson attack on the animation company, a fire department official said. A man reportedly doused the building with flammable liquid and shouted "drop dead." A motive for the apparent attack remained unclear hours after the blaze.

PHOTO: AFP

33 killed in 'arson attack'

FROM PAGE 20

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe took to Twitter to express his horror. "It's so dreadful that I'm lost for words," he wrote.

"I pray for those who passed away."

Police said they were still investigating the cause of the fire but that it was a suspected arson attack.

"A man threw a liquid and set fire to it," a Kyoto prefectural police spokesman told AFP.

Public broadcaster NHK reported that a man had been detained in connection with the blaze and was later taken to hospital for treatment. He reportedly suffered serious injuries in the fire.

NHK said the suspect had poured a gasoline-like substance around the

building and said "drop dead" as he set fire to it.

The eyewitness who spoke to Kyodo said one of the injured "claimed to have been splashed with kerosene or something like it".

Local media reported that the suspected attacker appeared to also have been armed with knives.

Kyoto Animation's president Hideaki Hatta told reporters "there have been emails with death threats", without giving further details.

He said the building gutted by the blaze was "the core of the company", which has produced several well-known television anime series including "The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya" and "K-ON!"

"It's unbearable that those who have led Japan's animation industry

were hurt and lost their lives."

The blaze prompted an outpouring of support from those in Japan's anime industry, one of the country's best known cultural exports, and fans around the world.

Japan has a famously low crime rate. Arson is considered a serious crime and people convicted of deliberately setting fires in a country where many people still live in wooden houses can face the death penalty.

A man convicted of setting a fire that killed 16 people in Osaka in 2008 is currently on death row.

In 2016, a knife-wielding man went on the rampage at a care home for the mentally disabled, killing 19 in the country's worst mass killing in decade.

Only 7 public universities

FROM PAGE 20

universities, in February last year asked all universities to form a uniform admission system. But the decision has not yet been implemented fully.

Under the system, admission seekers would be enrolled at public universities based on the merit list prepared from one single test.

For example, students would take one test for a place in any of the science and technology universities and another test for a place in any of the agriculture universities.

That would relieve admission seekers from the wasted time, costs and travels required to take separate admission tests for different public universities. At present, only medical colleges have a uniform entrance test.

"We are on track about introducing the cluster system for agriculture universities. We are determined to start the system," said Prof Kamal Uddin Ahamed, president of Bangladesh Bishwabidyalaya Parishad, an association of public university vice-chancellors.

"So far, we have decided to hold one single test," Kamal, also VC of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh Bishwabidyalaya Parishad in a meeting yesterday

decided that Bangladesh Agricultural University, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Sylhet Agricultural University, Khulna Agricultural University, Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University and Patuakhali Science and Technology University would introduce the cluster admission system this year.

Kamal said that the instructions regarding the uniform admission system were complex and they have already held several meetings to fix the procedure.

Education ministry officials said that some public universities have been opposing the idea of the "cluster system" from the beginning, as its implementation would cut the income of the universities as well as teachers from the sale of admission forms and from invigilation and checking answer scripts.

"They might consider themselves competent in holding admission tests. They might also fear that the cluster system may make lose their standard," Kamal added.

Students, meanwhile, are the ones who would have to take the trouble.

They would need to buy admission forms for Tk 400 to Tk 700 each and also spend a handsome amount on

travelling to universities to sit for each of the tests.

There are cases when candidates even take separate tests for seats in separate faculties and departments of the same university.

Sometimes the dates of admission tests of different universities coincide.

The UGC has long been advocating for the cluster system, suggesting in several of its previous annual reports to modify the admission process terming it too expensive, questionable and coaching-oriented.

A UGC study in May 2013 found that an admission seeker had to spend an average of Tk 43,100 on coaching and other admission related expenditure.

The study found 93 per cent of admission seekers take coaching classes to get admitted to higher education institutions.

Education Minister Dipu Moni hoped that the uniform admission test system would be introduced in "most of the public universities" next year.

"Some universities want to conduct the admission tests on their own," she said, adding that, "The vice chancellor's council is discussing the issue and we want to come to a decision on the uniform admission system this year."

Factories hit by water crisis

FROM PAGE 20

the ground.

"Entrepreneurs are in an existential crisis. No new investments have been made since the crisis hit the area. The government should implement a long-term solution," he said.

Local Government and Rural Development Minister Md Tazul Islam met business leaders on June 28 in Chattogram and said a project worth more than Tk 2,000 crore would be undertaken to mitigate the crisis in the industrial belt, from Sitakunda to Mirsarai. He said they would finish their preliminary study this year.

Harunur Rashid, executive member of Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA), said the Mirsarai economic zone would need 135 crore litres of water a day to run the factories when it opens. The economic zone will house local and foreign companies and will be on 30,000 acres.

"If the supply cannot be arranged, future investment of at least \$13 billion will be at risk," he said at the meeting. The land is currently being prepped.

Almas Shimul, additional managing director of GPH Ispat, said they are worried about the supply of water for their new steel factory that will need 60 lakh litres a day.

The company buys two lakh litres a day from WASA to support its operations. "We have more than 4,000 workers. We need water even for their day-to-day activities."

GPH is set to start production in its newly built Tk 2,000 crore steel factory at Kumira in Sitakunda this month.

"Gas and power supplies are good at the moment. But we need water. If we can't go for production on time, the government will lose more than Tk 226 crore in revenue a year. The employment of at least 10,000 people will be at risk," he added.

Engineer AKM Fajlullah, managing director of Chattogram WASA, told The Daily Star that no one thought about from where they would get water before building their factories.

"Projects to ensure water supply to Sitakunda and Mirsarai Economic Zone will begin soon. BEZA will bear the cost of the preliminary study for the project."

Mir Musarrof Hossen, chief engineer of Water Development Board, Chattogram division, said they received a letter from business leaders asking for permission to source water from Mohamaya Lake at Mirsarai.

"However, the agro economy of the area depends on the water of Mohamaya Lake. We have to assess how much water remains after meeting the irrigation needs. We are yet to conduct a study on it."

Officials at the local upazila nirbahi officer's office claimed that investors were first attracted to this area before the country's independence as it was in close proximity to the Dhaka-

Chattogram highway and labour was available.

In a geological survey done between 1968 and 1970, the underground water reserve of the area was found below average depth compared to adjacent areas.

German captain to face Italy prosecutor over migrants

AFP, Agrigento

German captain Carola Rackete, who sparked international headlines by forcibly docking in an Italian port with rescued migrants, faces questioning by an Italian prosecutor over allegedly aiding illegal immigration.

The captain of the Sea-Watch 3 is expected to be questioned in the southern Sicilian town of Agrigento from 10:00 am yesterday.

Rackete was arrested on June 29 for entering Italy's Lampedusa port despite a veto imposed by far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, and knocking a coast guard boat out of the way to land 40 migrants after over two weeks blocked at sea.

A judge overturned the arrest three days later, saying the 31-year old had merely acted to save lives.

Govt to revive

FROM PAGE 2

Bangladesh has potential of fisheries resources in the sea which needs to be extracted, she said, adding, "So, the government has put emphasis on blue economy."

Laboratories have been set up in Dhaka, Chattogram and Khulna to maintain an international standard of fish and fish products, Hasina added.

The PM stressed the importance of maintaining an international standard of fish and fish products for export as riverine Bangladesh could grab the first position in the world in producing fish from inland water

bodies, UNB adds.

She also underscored the need for dredging of rivers to maintain biodiversity as well as help boost fish production.

"We can solve the malnutrition problem of the country's people through boosting fish production."

The PM said livelihoods of 11 percent people are now directly or indirectly related to the fisheries sector, while contribution of the sector to the country's GDP is 3.61 percent.

Later, Hasina released fish fry into the Gono Bhaban Lake, marking the "National Fisheries Week-2019".

Boy finds

FROM PAGE 20

"1,000 miles east of Fremantle, Western Australia, asked its recipient to "Please Reply".

Although Iyah initially thought the letter was a fake, he was quick to post a reply on Wednesday.

"He was so excited," his mother Carla Elliott told the ABC.

Gilmore's sister Annie Crossland told the ABC that her brother was currently cruising but would be sure to contact Iyah when he returns home.

"It's amazing, absolutely incredible," Crossland said. "He'll be chuffed to bits."

She said the family had long ago moved on from the reply address on the letter.

Gilmore sent six bottles from the TSS Fairstar, a ship that transported so-called "10-pound Pom" migrants from Great Britain to Australia.

"The last time he was on a ship was probably going to Australia," she said. "Cruises aren't his thing."

Finish trial

FROM PAGE 20

The prosecutor will discharge duties as the coordinator of the monitoring committee and send reports on its activities to the Supreme Court and the ministries of home and law, it also said.

The court said monitoring committees will be accountable if the state fails to produce the witnesses before the court on the scheduled days without logical reasons.

The directives also mentioned that the tribunals will recommend for departmental action against the official witnesses like magistrate, police, doctor, and other experts if they do not appear before the courts without providing satisfactory reasons and will order for halting their salaries if they feel necessary, it said.

Earlier, it expressed disappointment

over the prolonged trials of the incidents of rape and murder after rape while holding hearings on three appeals filed by four accused seeking bail in separate rape cases.

The court rejected the appeals filed by accused Md Rahel alias Rayhan of Bogura and Sekandar Ali of Dhaka seeking bail in two separate cases filed over the rape of two children in March and June last year.

The HC bench, however, granted bail to accused Sarower Rubel and Emran in a similar case filed in Noakhali in October 2017.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam represented the state while Advocate Golam Akhter Zakir, Advocate Md Abdullah Al Mahbub and Advocate Marzia Zaman appeared for the accused appellants respectively.

GM Quader

FROM PAGE 20

Wishing anonymity, a presidium member told this correspondent that party's pre-sidium members usually picked its chief.

But another presidium member SM Faysal Chisty said Ershad during his illness made Quader as the party's acting chairman.

"Sir [Ershad] also announced that Quader bhai will be the party chairman in his absence and urged the party men to elect him [Quader] as the party's next chief in the next council of Jatiya Party," he said.

"It is normal that Quader bhai will become the party chief as sir [Ershad] is no more," he added.

Admitting that a section of JP senior leaders has rift with Quader over the party's top leadership, Faysal said he and some other leaders were trying to reduce the division between the party's top leaders to unite the party.

"Party's senior leaders are getting benefits from the party in different ways. But the party's mid and lower level leaders have been deprived always. We will suffer further, if the party is divided again," he said.

"Therefore, we have no alternative but to be united."

At a press conference in the party's Banani office, Ranga said that before his death, Ershad announced that Quader would be the party chairman in his ab-sence. "So, we've decided that GM Quader is our party chairman from toady [yes-terday]."

He also urged journalists to mention

Quader as the JP chairman.

Immediately after the announcement, Quader told reporters that there was no conflict or division within their party.

"All of the Jatiya Party leaders and activists are united. We'll make the party stronger further with the united efforts by turning our grief over the death of Palli Bondhu [Ershad] into strength."

Asked, he said party's parliamentary party would decide who would be the leader of the opposition.

JP chairman and leader of the opposition Ershad who died on Sunday was laid to eternal rest on Tuesday at Polli Nibash in his hometown Rangpur where he was a popular political figure for over three decades.

On May 4, former military ruler Ershad made Quader as the party's acting chair-man. But party insiders said a section of JP senior leaders could not accept that.

On March 22, he removed Quader from the post as he had been under immense pressure from the Raushan faction to do so, party insiders said.

He also relieved Quader of the co-chairman post, saying his brother failed to dis-charge his duties and created divisions within the party.

The following day, Ershad also removed Quader from the post of deputy leader of the opposition.

But around two weeks later, Ershad, known for his flip-flops in politics, reinstated Quader to the post of co-chairman and then again acting chairman of the party.

Investigation

FROM PAGE 20

framework of the treaty of the ICC," visiting ICC Deputy Prosecutor James Stewart told a press briefing in the capital yesterday.

He said the prosecutor office's "mandate is purely legal" and it "has no political role" to play in investigating alleged violence against Rohingya while they were obligated to perform their job "independently, impartially and objectively".

"We do not...and cannot participate in national political debates or considerations of relations between states. Our mandate is completely separate," Stewart added.

He, however, said the ICC prosecutors were yet to launch the investigation as their chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda's recent request for launching the investigation now awaited ICC judges' approval in line with the ICC rules.

Stewart said he was visiting Bangladesh to engage with the Bangladesh officials and other stakeholders includ-ing the atrocity victims ahead of the expected opening of the investigation.

"If we are authorised to do an investigation, we will work in strict conformity with the law, which in our case is the legal framework of the treaty of the ICC," he said.

He said they proposed the Bangladesh government to sign a MoU in this regard as a state party to the ICC. "This is a normal practice everywhere and a matter of discussion. There is no negativity from the part of Bangladesh".

The ICC prosecutor said they also sought Myanmar's cooperation in investigating the matter but they did not get any response from them so far.

But, Stewart said, there was a reasonable basis to believe that at least 700,000 Rohingyas were deported from Myanmar to Bangladesh through a range of coercive acts and "there is a reasonable basis to believe that the Rohingya people have suffered persecution as result of these alleged crimes".

On July 4, Bensouda requested to the judges of the ICC to authorise the opening of an investigation into alleged crimes against humanity against Rohingyas.

The ICC was established to deal with war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed after July 1, 2002 and the crime of aggression, July 17, 2018.

The ICC delegation members held meetings with ministers and senior officials and are scheduled to visit Rohingya camps and hold a meeting with government authorities on Saturday.