

Thousands march in Brazil against Bolsonaro

AFP, Brasília

Tens of thousands of women took to the streets of Brazil's capital Wednesday to denounce President Jair Bolsonaro, in the third anti-government protest in the city in two days.

The huge demonstration in Brasilia comes as Bolsonaro faces increasing heat over rampant deforestation in the Amazon rainforest as well as education funding cuts, which have sparked nationwide protests by students and professors in recent months, including one in the capital on Tuesday.

The "March of the Margaridas" is named after Brazilian trade union leader Margarida Maria Alves, who

was murdered in 1983 during the military dictatorship.

Held every four years, the protest demands better rural living conditions and protection of women's rights.

Many of the thousands of tribal women who marched on Tuesday in protest against Bolsonaro's "genocidal policies" joined Wednesday's demonstration, which also condemned Bolsonaro's plan to open up indigenous territory to mining and the government's policy to increase the use of pesticides and weed killers.

"We are living in difficult times with a government that attacks us continuously," Juliana Joucoski, a 43-year-old teacher from the southern city of Curitiba, told AFP.

"We are losing hard-won rights."

Toll from Tanzania fuel truck blast rises to 85: governor

AFP, Nairobi

The death toll from a fuel truck explosion in Tanzania has climbed to 85, a local governor said Wednesday, after 10 more people died from injuries sustained in the horrific blast.

A massive fireball engulfed a crowd thronging to collect petrol from an overturned tanker Saturday near the town of Morogoro, some 200 kilometres (125 miles) west of Dar es Salaam, the financial capital.

The initial explosion killed dozens, with others rushed to hospital with burns and serious injuries in one of the deadliest oil tanker blasts in Africa in recent years.

A spokesman for the National Hospital in Dar es Salaam, Aminiel Aligaesha, said Wednesday that seven more people had died, taking the overall death toll to 82. Another 32 were being treated, including 17 in intensive care, he added.

"We are continuing to fight as best we can to save those still alive," the hospital spokesman, Aminiel Aligaesha, told reporters Wednesday.

But later Wednesday, Morogoro governor Stephen Kebwe told reporters the death toll had risen once again.

"Three more deaths occurred during the day," he said, confirming the new toll of 85.

The flames swept through a large crowd trying to siphon leaking petrol from a truck that overturned as it swerved to avoid a motorcycle.

Officials said the explosion was triggered when a man tried to retrieve the truck's battery, creating sparks that ignited the fuel.

An official inquiry was ordered Sunday into the accident, with a preliminary report expected later this week.

It was the latest in a string of such disasters in Africa and at least the third this year.

Last month, 45 people were killed and more than 100 injured in central Nigeria when a petrol tanker crashed and then exploded as people tried to take the fuel. In May, a similar incident in Niger killed nearly 80 people.

8 killed in LoC clashes

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Separately, two civilians were killed and one injured by the Indian troops along the LoC in Rawalakot district in Pakistani-held Kashmir, a senior local official there told AFP.

The official, Mirza Arshad Jarral, said intermittent exchanges of fire between the two militaries had been going on since morning.

The former princely state of Kashmir was divided between Pakistan and India on their independence from Britain in 1947.

They have fought two of their three wars over the territory -- though none since both countries acquired nuclear weapons.

Tensions skyrocketed following India's shock move to revoke the autonomy of its portion of the disputed Himalayan territory last week.

On Wednesday, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan addressed the local legislative assembly of the Pakistani-administered Kashmir in Muzaffarabad.

He vowed the time had come to teach Delhi a lesson and promised to "fight until the end" against any Indian aggression.

Khan has also likened India's moves in Kashmir to Nazi Germany, accused them of ethnic cleansing, and appealed to the international community to take action.

Pakistan formally asked the United Nations Security Council late Tuesday to hold an emergency session to address the situation.

A diplomat at UNSC yesterday told AFP that The UN body will meet behind closed doors today to discuss India's move to strip Kashmir of its autonomy.

Poland, which currently holds the council's rotating presidency, has listed the matter for discussion at 10:00 am (1400 GMT) today, the diplomats said.

Islamabad has also expelled the Indian ambassador, halted bilateral trade and suspended cross-border transport services.

However, analysts said the actions were unlikely to move Delhi.

Earlier this year Pakistan and India came close to all-out conflict yet again, after a militant attack in Indian-held Kashmir in February was claimed by a group based in Pakistan, igniting tit-for-tat air strikes.

TEXAS MASS SHOOTINGS

US Congress subpoenas 8chan website owner

AFP, Washington

The US Congress subpoenaed the owner of 8chan Wednesday, 11 days after a Texas man posted a racist screed on the website just before massacring 22 people in El Paso.

The House Committee on Homeland Security demanded website owner Jim Watkins testify before it on September 5 as part of work on how to counter extremist content online.

The site has become known for carrying content and discussions from the far right.

So far this year, the manifestos from three mass shooters have been posted on 8chan: the white supremacist who slaughtered 51 at mosques in New Zealand, an anti-Semitic man who attacked a California synagogue, killing one, and the El Paso gunman, who targeted Hispanics.

"In recent years, violent extremist content has proliferated on both large and small social media platforms. At least three acts of deadly white supremacist extremist violence have

been linked to 8chan in the last six months," the committee said in a statement.

"We have questions on what is being done to counter this trend so we can be sure it is being properly addressed."

The subpoena was issued after Watkins indicated to the committee that he would not testify voluntarily in person.

"I am always available to talk to you by telephone," he told the committee in an email posted on 8chan's Twitter account on August 6.

Watkins, a US citizen who lives in the Philippines, defended the website last week, attacking efforts to shut it down by denying it a host online, and insisting it had not broken any laws.

"It is actually sinister behavior. Ours is one of the last independent companies that offer a place you may write down your thoughts free from having to worry about whether they are offensive to one group or another," he said in a video uploaded to YouTube.



A seasonal trader near a pickup carrying rawhide in old Dhaka's Chawkbazar area yesterday morning. The man came all the way from Kishoreganj's Bhairab to sell some 150 pieces of rawhide, but he could not find a buyer till last night.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Govt plans school meal to cut dropout

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vegetable oil and locally-grown fresh vegetables and, if possible, with eggs so that students get enough protein and micronutrients.

The menu will be selected in consultation with the school managing committee, parents and locals. Mothers will also be included in the programme to be overseen by an advisory committee comprising respected locals.

The policy also proposes the formation of a National School Meal Authority under the primary and mass education ministry and creation of a Food and Nutrition Research and Development Centre.

A GIGANTIC TASK

Although the draft has been finalised, the ministry is still in a dilemma as to whether to provide hot meals or fortified biscuits.

To prepare hot meals, each school will require a kitchen as well as manpower, including a cook, said

ministry officials.

If it is vegetable khichuri, it will require about Tk 8,500 crore a year, said Gias Uddin Ahmed, the additional secretary, while presenting a keynote paper on the draft policy in April.

The cost will be half if fortified biscuits are provided instead of hot meals, he said.

But the problem with fortified biscuits is that students cannot eat them at one go. They rather need to eat those at intervals and drink a lot of water after taking each biscuit.

Gias said they would request businesses and banks to spend their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund for the programme.

"We are considering a package comprised of khichuri, biscuit, egg and local fruits for the programme," said Akram, the secretary.

The ministry is now preparing a Development Project Proforma on the school feeding programme, he said,

adding, "Once it is done, we will be able to say exactly how much money will be required."

CURRENT SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES

The country now has two school feeding programmes, said Ruhul Amin Khan, project director of School Feeding Programme.

Under one programme, the government is giving biscuit packets, each weighing 75 grams, to nearly 3 million children at primary schools in 104 upazilas, he said.

The government introduced the programme in 2010, following in the footsteps of the WFP, which ran a project to feed schoolchildren from 2001 to 2009.

Under a separate pilot project since 2013, about 34,000 students are getting hot meals in three upazilas -- Bamna in Barguna, Islampur of Jamalpur and Lama of Bandarban, he said.

Nation pays glowing tribute to its hero

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joined a milad and dua mahfil, organised by the Cabinet Division and the Gopalganj district administration, on the mazar premises.

The AL took elaborate programmes to observe the Day. In the morning, party leaders placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in the capital.

They also placed wreaths and offered Fateha at the Banani graveyard for Bangabandhu's family members.

A delegation of the AL Central Executive Committee joined the programmes in Tungipara.

In the afternoon, party leaders distributed foods among the poor and orphans at the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital.

Besides, Awami Jubo League, Krishak League and Chhatra League organised separate programmes,

marking the Day.

The district and upazila administrations observed the Day through holding doa mahfils and discussions.

Special prayers were offered at mosques and places of worships of other religions across the country seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of Bangabandhu and his deceased family members.

All city corporations, district councils, municipalities and union parishads organised different programmes to observe the Day.

Bangladesh missions abroad arranged discussions and hoisted the national flag half-mast atop their offices.

Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television, private TV channels and radio stations aired special programmes marking the National Mourning Day.

The national dailies and local newspapers brought out special supplements yesterday. Besides, specially designed posters were displayed at educational institutions and other public places.

PM JOINS MILAD

Prime Minister Hasina joined a milad and doa mahfil in front of the capital's Bangabandhu Memorial Museum after Asr prayers yesterday.

Bangladesh Mohila Awami League arranged the programme marking the National Mourning Day.

PM's daughter Saima Wazed Hossain and other family members and relatives also attended the milad.

Meanwhile, a discussion will be held at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre at 4:00pm today on the occasion of the National Mourning Day, with the PM in the chair.

No let-up in dengue woes

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On average, 1,000 to 1,500 people come to the hospital to get tested for the dengue virus, but only 10 percent test positive for the mosquito-borne infection, said Nasir.

The huge rush of people going to hospitals to take the tests is also taking a toll on already stretched medical resources.

Eight-year-old Jannat had been waiting in a chair near the queue of a lab of DMCH for the last few hours to do a blood test for dengue.

As around 1,500 people came to the hospital with fever to do NS1 dengue test, Jannat had to wait around three hours in serial after completing all necessary procedures.

"I brought Jannat to the hospital as she has been suffering from fever for the last two days and many neighbours suggested she be taken to hospital immediately," said Rubina Begum, aunty of Jannat.

The child had to wait several hours to give her blood after around three hours' journey from Keraniganj, she said.

Abdur Rahim, 70, and his wife Rabeya Khatun, 60, who came to the Shaheed Suhrawady Medical College Hospital from Uttara sector-14, also had to wait for hours to take the dengue test.

Both of them could stand in

the long queue only for around 20 minutes due to their high fever and eventually they sat on the hospital's floor near the lab and waited for their turn.

"We are very panicked about dengue virus as we have been running a high fever for the last three days," said Rahim.

In the latest tally, the number of dengue patients is 48,280, of whom 7,570 are currently admitted to hospitals across the country.

THREE MORE DIE

A medical assistant of Madaripur Sadar Health Complex, Tapon Kumar Mandal, died of dengue in the city's Bangladesh Medical College Hospital.

He was admitted to the hospital yesterday afternoon and breathed his last around 1:30pm, said a hospital official.

Mandal was diagnosed with dengue around four days ago.

An official of DGHS said Tapan was transferred to zone-10 (Shyampur and Jurain) of Dhaka South City Corporation from Madaripur two weeks back to assist dengue patients.

Meanwhile, at least two other people died of dengue fever in Dhaka yesterday, taking the unofficial death toll to 93.

The official death toll, however, is

still 40.

Raz Chowdhury, an around 3-year-old child, died of dengue at Dhaka Shishu Hospital yesterday.

Raz, son of assistant register of National Institute of Cardio Vascular Disease Nirmol Kanti Chowdhury was admitted to the hospital around 3:30pm, said Abdul Hakim, public relations officer of the hospital.

He was shifted to the Incentive Care Unit immediately but breathed his last around 1:30pm yesterday, Hakim added.

In DMCH, Mousumi, 25, a resident of Agargaon Taltola of Mirpur died of dengue yesterday.

Mousumi was admitted to the hospital around 9:30am yesterday and died around 11:30am, said Nasiruddin Mamun, husband of Mousumi.

In Bagerhat, eight dengue patients were identified yesterday, increasing the number of such patients in the district to 79.

Bagerhat Civil Surgeon Dr GKM Shamsuzzaman said most of the dengue infected people were returned from Dhaka.

Health officials are advising dengue patients to stay in mosquito-nets so that it cannot spread, he said.

Our Bagerhat correspondent contributed to the report.

ASSASSINATION PLOT

Venezuela's Maduro accuses former Colombian president

REUTERS, Caracas

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Wednesday accused former Colombian President Alvaro Uribe of plotting to assassinate him in cohorts with Colombia's US ambassador Francisco Santos, and exiled Venezuelan opposition leader Lester Toledo.

It was not the first time Maduro, a socialist, accused politicians from neighboring Colombia of plotting against him, as relations between the two countries deteriorate amid an economic crisis in Venezuela that has prompted more than one million migrants to settle in Colombia.

During a state television broadcast on Wednesday evening, Maduro gave a detailed account of how the three plotted the attack from "a bunker" in a house belonging to Uribe, a right-wing leader who has been an outspoken critic of Maduro and his predecessor and mentor, the late former President Hugo Chavez.

"It is a plan for 32 mercenaries to enter to try to assassinate me and leaders of the revolution," Maduro said. "But we are here, protected by God."

Colombian Foreign Minister Carlos Holmes denied the allegation in a post on Twitter, saying the government "rejects the delirious and slanderous accusations by the dictator Maduro against two Colombians who have dedicated their lives to serving democracy."

A press advisor to Uribe did not respond to a request for comment. Toledo, who is based in Colombia, has been designated by Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido as his international coordinator for efforts to bring in humanitarian aid. He could not be reached for comment.

Maduro frequently calls current Colombian President Ivan Duque a "lackey" for U.S. interests. Maduro has accused Colombia and the United States of being behind a drone explosion at a military parade last year, which he describes as an assassination attempt.

Condition

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members said she was raped at her neighbour's house when she went there to have mehendi on her arms on the eve of Eid.

As she was waiting at the veranda of the house for her aunt, Al Amin, 27, a tenant of the building, gagged her with a strip of cloth and forced her into his room, police said.

Amin and his associate Manjur Alam, 25, then tied her up and raped her, they added.

Both Al Amin and Manjur were killed in what police said was a gunfight early Wednesday.

Non-profit Coast Trust was assisting the girl's family in bearing the treatment and legal costs.