

Seven crew members from tanker seized by Iran to be released

AFP, Stockholm

Seven crew members of a Swedish-owned tanker seized by Iran in July will be released, the chief executive of Stena Bulk that owns the tanker said yesterday.

"Seven crew members will be released according to the Iranian authorities... but we don't know when," Stena Bulk CEO Erik Hanell told AFP, adding that the company was "cautiously" awaiting official confirmation of their release date.

The British-flagged tanker has a total crew of 23 on board.

"We view this communication as a positive step on the way to the release of all the remaining crew, which has always been our primary concern and focus," Stena Bulk said in a statement sent to AFP.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps seized control of the Stena Impero on July 19 as it was navigating through an international passage in the middle of the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow chokepoint at the entrance of the Gulf.

The ship has since been held offshore near Iran's southern port of Bandar Abbas.

Iranian officials have given varying reasons for its seizure and continued detention.

Rohingya

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and then these people carried the body to Bangladesh territory," a senior Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

BGB regional commander Ali Haider Azad Ahmed said the dead man is believed to be a Rohingya refugee.

The man, believed to be in his 30s, has not yet been identified. A spokesman for the nearby state-run hospital said parts of his legs were blown off in the blast.

"The injuries bore hallmarks of landmine explosions," local police chief Anwar Hossain told AFP.

Myanmar troops have been accused of waging an ethnic cleansing campaign against the country's Rohingya Muslim minority, with some 740,000 fleeing to Bangladesh since August 2017.

At the height of the mass exodus when tens of thousands of Rohingya poured into Bangladesh every day, several were killed or seriously hurt in suspected landmine explosions along the border.

Anti-personnel mines were banned under a global treaty in 1997.

Rights groups Amnesty International said then that it had documented what appeared to be the targeted use of landmines along a narrow stretch forming part of the northwestern border of Rakhine.

'SI, informant

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The Daily Star has obtained a video clip of her interview to journalists.

Police yesterday said the victim filed a case against four persons without naming one of them.

Talking to journalists yesterday, Mainul Hoque, superintendent of police in Jessore, said, "Four people, including SI Khairul, were produced before the complainant in the evening [Tuesday]. But she could not recognise Khairul. We assume that it was not him. It could be someone else by the name Khairul."

He further said, "We have sent our senior officers to the spot. We will do everything to unearth the truth because a police officer's name came up..."

Salahuddin Shikder, additional superintendent of police in Jashore, told this correspondent that SI Khairul was produced before the victim several times on Tuesday night, but she didn't identify Khairul as rapist.

He further said a committee has been formed to investigate the incident, and SI Khairul was withdrawn for the sake of an impartial probe.

This correspondent went to the victim's house yesterday afternoon but found none there. Her neighbours could not say anything about her whereabouts.

Mashiur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sharsha police station, told this newspaper that they sent the woman to her house by a police vehicle after recording the case.

Meanwhile, police arrested three accused -- Kamrul Islam, 40, Omar Ali, 50, and Abdul Latif, 48, -- raiding different places in the area.

Arif Ahmed, resident doctor at Jessore Sadar Hospital, said the victim came to the emergency unit on Tuesday afternoon.

"After hearing her claims, we informed police about the matter. Md Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge at Jessore Kotwali Police Station, came here and took her to the Jessore SP," the physician told this newspaper.

"Specimens were collected from the victim. We will get the reports soon," he added.



Anti-Brexit activists opposing the British government's actions in relation to the handling of Brexit, protest outside the Houses of Parliament in central London yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Fresh blow to UK PM's Brexit plan

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however, the opposition Labour party is expected to withhold its support for the election, which requires the backing of two-thirds of MPs.

The defeat comes the day after MPs defied the government in a preparatory vote on the draft bill on Tuesday evening, when 21 of Johnson's own Conservative lawmakers rebelled.

He expelled them all, depriving his six-week-old government of a parliamentary majority.

'SHAM' NEGOTIATIONS

Johnson took office in July, three years after the 2016 referendum to leave the EU, promising to deliver Brexit whatever happens.

He says he wants to renegotiate the divorce deal struck with Brussels by his predecessor Theresa May, arguing that his threat of leaving with "no deal" will force EU leaders to agree better terms.

Brussels has so far refused, and

the European Commission warned yesterday it saw no alternative to the current withdrawal agreement.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said the idea that Johnson is negotiating with Brussels was "a sham -- all he's doing is running down the clock."

But Johnson insisted his team, which met with customs experts in Brussels yesterday, was making "substantial progress".

The EU Commission also said the risk of a "no deal" exit has increased, a prospect many fear because of the economic damage it could cause after almost half a century of close ties with Britain's closest neighbours.

However, Bank of England governor Mark Carney said yesterday the institution believed the impact would be "less severe" than previously forecast, in part because of government preparations.

LABOUR 'NOT DANCING'

On Tuesday night, rebel Tories joined

with Labour and other opposition MPs to clear the Commons timetable to debate their own Brexit legislation.

Their bill would force the government to delay Brexit until January 31 unless it has agreed exit terms with the EU at a summit on October 17-18, or secured MPs' approval for a "no deal" divorce.

But it also raises the prospect of rolling Brexit delays, and Johnson warned it would only cause "more confusion" and wreck any hopes of a deal.

It must be approved by MPs and the unelected House of Lords before Monday to take effect.

Johnson earlier challenged Labour to back his call for an election, urging Corbyn to "let the people decide" how to resolve the Brexit impasse.

However, the party is expected to abstain amid fears Johnson might reschedule the poll until after October 31 to make sure that Britain leaves the bloc, with or without a deal.

"Nobody believes him because the levels of trust in Boris Johnson are very, very low," Labour's Brexit spokesman Keir Starmer told ITV.

"So we're not going to be voting with Johnson today. We want a general election, but we're not dancing to his tune."

Johnson has received a poll boost for his tough talk on Brexit, but an election could also be a risk, as the Conservatives are threatened by the eurosceptic Brexit Party.

There was some respite for the government yesterday when a court in Scotland ruled that Johnson's decision to suspend parliament for over a month starting next week was lawful.

The 75 parliamentarians behind the legal challenge accused the prime minister of curbing opposition attempts to block his Brexit strategy and bring down his government.

A similar case will be heard in London today.

HK extradition bill withdrawn

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"I pledge that the government will seriously follow up the recommendations of the IPCC (Independent Police Complaints Council) report. From this month, I and my principal officials will reach out to the community to start a direct dialogue ... we must find ways to address the discontent in society and look for solutions."

But pro-democracy activists vowed to press on with their campaign.

The protests began in March but snowballed in June and have since evolved into a push for greater democracy for the city which returned to China in 1997.

The bill would have allowed extraditions to mainland China where courts are controlled by the Communist Party.

It was not immediately clear if

killing the bill would help end the unrest. The immediate reaction appeared sceptical and the real test will be how many people take to the streets.

Some lawmakers said the move should have come earlier.

"The damage has been done. The scars and wounds are still bleeding," said pro-democracy legislator Claudia Mo. "She thinks she can use a garden hose to put out a hill fire. That's not going to be acceptable."

FIVE DEMANDS, NOT ONE MISSING

In the voice recording obtained by Reuters, Lam said at a meeting last week that her room to find a political solution to the crisis was "very limited", as authorities in Beijing now viewed the situation as a matter of national security.

Beijing's apparent endorsement of the withdrawal of the bill comes

after the biggest popular challenge to Chinese President Xi Jinping's rule since he took power in 2012.

Others said the move was not enough, many on street corners after nightfall shouting: "Five demands, not one missing."

"We still have four other demands. We hope people won't forget that," said Ms Chan, speaking for the protest movement and not giving her full name. "The mobilisation power won't decrease."

The protesters' other four demands are: the retraction of the word "riot" to describe rallies, the release of all arrested demonstrators, an independent inquiry into the police perceived brutality and the right for Hong Kong people to democratically choose their own leaders.

"Too little, too late," said Joshua Wong, a leader of the 2014 pro-

democracy protests which were the precursor to the current unrest, on his Facebook page.

Pro-Beijing lawmaker Cheung Kwok-kwan said Lam's announcement was not a compromise to appease those promoting violence but a bid to win over moderates in the protest camp.

"It was likely speaking to the so-called peaceful, rational, non-violent people who were dissatisfied with the government's response before," he said.

The chief executive's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the bill's withdrawal.

Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng Index jumped after the report of the bill's imminent withdrawal, trading up about 4%. The property index also jumped.

Bangladesh's ours, for all

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to everything. "The Awami League government always thinks that this country is for all. Please don't treat yourselves as minority."

Mentioning that this land is for all, Hasina said, "Why don't you have faith in you? Awami League never sees its people through this dividing attitude," she added.

She said if capable enough each and every citizen would get equal chance in every sector. "We're ensuring that. Bangladesh is ours, all irrespective of their religions made sacrifice for the liberation of this country. This country belongs to all."

Talking about her government's philosophy of "religion is for individuals and festivals are for all", the prime minister said people of all faiths had fought shoulder-to-shoulder in 1971 and embraced martyrdom to liberate the country.

Underscoring the need for maintaining communal and religious harmony in the country, Hasina said every religion preaches peace, fraternity and tolerance and it is the important aspect of religion.

About the law enacted by her government for the Hindu community which is similar to "hiba law" of the Muslim community, she said the government formulated it to facilitate the transfer of property of Hindu community members to their close relatives without having to pay any tax.

She extended her greetings to the Hindu community on the occasion

of Janmashtami, saying Sri Krishna had preached the message of love, justice and affection which all should promote.

Hasina said Lord Krishna was born to establish brotherhood among the people through "checking the wicked and nurturing the goods".

Among others, Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumdar, State Minister for Religious Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and President of Bangladesh Puja Uddipan Parishad Milan Kanti Dutta also attended the programme.

14 bus passengers killed by road mine in Mali

AFP, Bamako

Fourteen bus passengers were killed Tuesday by a road mine in central Mali, the bus company said, in an attack bearing the hallmarks of jihadists who plague the region.

The vehicle was en route from the central town of Douzenta to the northern town of Gao, Oumar Ould Mamoud of the Sonef bus company told AFP.

"The new toll is 14 dead and eight injured," he said, adding that there had been about 50 people on the bus.

Police earlier had given a toll of eight dead and 13 injured, and said the blast occurred 30 kilometres (18 miles) from Douzenta.

Biman

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aviation ministry told this newspaper.

According to the lease agreement, Biman would have to pay Tk 10 crore to EgyptAir per month for each of the aircraft even if they were not in service.

Both of the airliners went out of service months after their lease and remained stranded at a Vietnam airport since then.

In July this year, Biman sent back one of the aircraft.

BIMAN FAILS TO PICK NEW CEO

The Biman board has decided to float fresh recruitment circular for the position of its CEO and MD as the board of the national airlines failed to pick any from the applicants.

The board of directors came up with the decision following a meeting headed by its Chairman Air Marshal (retd) Muhammad Enamul Bari on Tuesday, meeting sources said.

Earlier in March this year, Biman circulated a recruitment notice looking for candidates for the posts of CEO and MD, and Deputy Managing Director.

An experience of 20 years in the aviation sector was required to apply for the post of the CEO and MD.

Around 70 applicants, including 12 foreigners, applied for the post of CEO and MD, Biman sources said.

Capt Farhat Hassan Jamil, who previously served as the director of flight operations in Biman, was made the acting CEO and MD of the airlines in April this year after its then CEO AM Mosaddique Ahmed was relieved on charges of alleged corruption.

1 in 3 young

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Snapchat and Twitter, are the most common place for online bullying.

"Connected classrooms mean school no longer ends once a student leaves class, and, unfortunately, neither does schoolyard bullying," said Unicef Executive Director Henrietta Fore.

"Improving young people's education experience means accounting for the environment they encounter online as well as offline."

Via SMS and instant messaging, young people were asked a series of questions about their experiences of online bullying and violence, including who they thought should be trying to end it, according to the poll.

Some 32 percent of those polled believe governments should be responsible for ending cyberbullying, 31 percent said young people and 29 percent said internet companies.

The poll results challenge the notion that cyberbullying among classmates is a uniquely high-income issue.

For example, 34 percent of respondents in sub-Saharan Africa said they had been victims of online bullying. And some 39 percent said they knew about private online groups inside the school community, where children share information about peers for the purpose of bullying.

As part of Unicef's campaign to #ENDviolence in and around schools, children and young people from around the world drafted a Youth Manifesto in 2018, calling on governments, teachers, parents and each other to help end violence and ensure students feel safe in and around school -- including calling for protection online.

To end online bullying and violence, the Unicef has called for the implementation of bullying and cyberbullying policies.

It has called for establishment of national helplines to support children and young people, advancement of ethical standards and practices of social network providers, specifically in regards to the collection of information and management of data.

The Unicef has also called for collection of better, disaggregated evidence about children and young people's online behaviour, and training for teachers and parents to prevent and respond to cyberbullying and bullying, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Schoolboy

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Carden sought legal orders to prevent the alleged nuisances from continuing.

A tribunal, and the state's highest court, has however, rejected her claims as unreasonable and lacking in evidence.

Her list of demands also included orders for a family living next door, and another neighbour, to reduce their patio lighting, silence their pets and to replace plants in the common garden.

Carden has challenged the tribunal's decision, adding that she planned on taking further legal action.