

# UN urges justice for Guinea stadium massacre 10 year on

AFP, Geneva

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged Guinea on Saturday to "speed up" the trial for those responsible for a massacre on more than 150 opposition supporters exactly 10 years ago.

More than 100 women were also raped by troops during a massive opposition protest in a stadium in the capital Conakry on September 28, 2009, against then junta chief Moussa Dadis Camara whose security forces opened fire on the crowd.

"Impunity has prevailed for too long in Guinea and is preventing victims' scars from healing," the UN's Michelle Bachelet said in a statement. "Sustainable peace and reconciliation will not be achieved until justice and accountability is upheld," she added.

Guinean judges completed the investigation into the massacre in 2017 but a trial date has still not been set.

On Friday, Guinea Prime Minister Ibrahim Kassory Fofana said the government was "determined" to organise a trial of the alleged perpetrators of the killings "to deliver justice to the victims".

A UN Commission of Inquiry established in 2009 concluded that there was a "strong presumption that crimes against humanity were committed".

The UN said 156 people were killed, at least 109 girls and women were victims of sexual violence, corpses were buried in mass graves, demonstrators were tortured and authorities "modified" crime scenes.

Bachelet said despite the investigation recommending Guinean authorities prosecute those responsible and compensate victims almost a decade ago, there had been "little tangible progress so far".

"It is particularly worrying that a number of high-ranking indicted officials are still serving and have not yet been brought to justice," she said, urging the authorities to "speed up the organisation of the trial".

Camara, a former army officer, seized power in 2008 after the death of Guinea's longtime dictator Lansana Conte.

After surviving an assassination attempt in 2009, Camara fled the to exile in Burkina Faso, where he was indicted in July 2015 by Guinean magistrates for his alleged involvement in the massacre.



Protesters gather together after a group occupied a main road near the central government offices in the Admiralty area in Hong Kong yesterday, on the fifth anniversary of the "Umbrella Movement".

PHOTO: AFP

## \$6M masterpiece

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eight scenes depicting Christ's passion and crucifixion.

Two other scenes from the work hang in the National Gallery in London -- "The Virgin and Child with Two Angels" -- and the Frick Collection in New York ("The Flagellation of Christ").

The scene in the National Gallery was also lost for centuries, and only found when a British aristocrat was clearing his ancestral seat in Suffolk.

It was given to the nation in 2000. The French painting's elderly owner thought it was just a rather old religious icon when she took it to her local auctioneers to be valued.

Early Renaissance art was hugely influenced by Byzantine art, which is still produced in a similar style today on a background of gold paint.

However, tests using infrared light found that there was "no disputing that the painting was done by the same hand" as other known works by Cimabue, said art expert Eric Turquin.

It will now go under the hammer at the Acteon auction house in Senlis, north of Paris, on October 27.

## Amendment

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The Road Transport Act-2018 could be amended, if needed, so that it could be enforced without any hindrance.

"Although the Road Transport Act-2018 was passed by parliament, its enforcement has not been possible due to various demands raised by the leaders of transport workers and owners. The law could be amended reviewing the enforcement of such laws in neighbouring countries," the minister said.

He came up with the information at a meeting of the sub-committee formed on the implementation of the Road Transport Act at the Bangladesh Secretariat.

The Road Transport Bill, 2018 was passed by parliament on September 19, 2018 keeping a provision of maximum five years' imprisonment and Tk 5 lakh fine or both for causing severe injuries to or any death of any person due to reckless driving.

## BNP finally

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The programme would be organised to press for the release of party chairperson Khaleda Zia, who is jail on corruption charges, said party sources.

Party leaders and activists from Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Bogura, Joypurhat, Pabna and Sirajganj are expected to join the rally, the sources said.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police said it gave permission for the rally on 22 conditions.

Those conditions include no one would say anything at the programme that goes against the state and could deteriorate law and order. Also, no speech in favour of war criminals would be allowed.

After completing rallies at other divisions, the BNP decided to organise a rally in Rajshahi division on July 29. It, however, had to defer the programme till September 12 due to "flood situation" in the country.

Earlier this month, the party said it would hold the rally today. But it was denied police permission.

Yesterday's police permission came after the BNP held a press conference in the morning.

Speaking there, BNP chief's adviser Mizanur Rahman Minu said the ruling Awami League was using police to foil the rally.

## Democrats subpoena Pompeo

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Volodymyr Zelensky in a July 25 phone call to supply dirt on former vice president Joe Biden, the favorite to represent Democrats against Trump in the 2020 presidential election.

The complaint also revealed that White House aides, alarmed at Trump's implicit offer to release aid in exchange for Zelensky's help, sought to hide the record of the call in a highly secure computer system normally used only for the country's most top-secret intelligence.

Congressional investigators on Friday announced interviews starting next week with five State Department officials, including former ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch, whom Trump reportedly forced out earlier this year for resisting his efforts to pressure Kiev to probe Biden.

The list also includes US special representative on Ukraine Kurt Volker, who resigned Friday after being ordered to answer questions in the impeachment investigation, a source familiar with the matter told AFP.

The whistleblower complaint said Volker met senior Ukrainian officials on how to "navigate" Trump's demands of Zelensky.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared that the impeachment investigation would move quickly, saying evidence from the whistleblower's complaint against Trump of abuse of power and an attempted cover-up was unambiguous.

"The clarity of the president's actions is compelling and gave us no choice but to move forward," Pelosi said.

In a series of tweets Trump attacked

Democrats -- including Adam Schiff, the lawmaker named by Pelosi to lead the impeachment probe -- calling them liars, while also taking aim at the "partisan" whistleblower and the "Fake News Media and their partner, the Democrat Party."

In a video leaked from a private gathering Trump held Thursday with US diplomats in New York, Trump made clear he was battling for his survival.

"We're at war. These people are sick," Trump says in the video obtained by Bloomberg.

Schiff said Friday his committee will issue more subpoenas next week and conduct a closed-door briefing with the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, the official who conducted a preliminary investigation into the whistleblower complaint and deemed it credible.

"We have to flesh out all of the facts for the American people. The seriousness of the matter and the danger to our country demands nothing less," Schiff said.

Meanwhile, more concerning allegations against Trump came to light late Friday, with The Washington Post reporting Trump told Russia's foreign minister and ambassador to the US he was unconcerned about Moscow's interference in the 2016 US elections because Washington did the same in other countries.

The paper cited three former officials who requested anonymity to discuss details of the May 2017 Oval Office meeting, during which he famously revealed highly classified information on the Islamic State group.

The comments reportedly alarmed

White House officials who restricted access to a memorandum describing the meeting to those with only the highest security access.

More than 300 high-level professionals from the national security community have signed a letter backing the impeachment investigation.

"President Trump appears to have leveraged the authority and resources of the highest office in the land to invite additional foreign interference into our democratic processes. That would constitute an unconscionable abuse of power," they said.

Meanwhile public support for impeachment jumped, according to two new polls. The Hill-HarrisX survey showed support up 12 percentage points to 47 percent, against 42 percent opposed, while Politico's poll showed support up seven points to 43 percent, now equal to those opposed.

Democrats said articles of impeachment -- formal charges -- against Trump could be completed in as soon as a month and then swiftly debated and voted on in the House, where the party has a majority solid enough to ensure passage.

The case would then be handed to the Senate to try Trump -- who, for the moment, appears able to count on a Republican majority in the chamber to prevent his conviction and removal.

"As a former prosecutor, I should tell you that cases are made much easier when the defendant cops to the act, and here the president is not denying what he said," Democrat Eric Swalwell, a member of the House Intelligence Committee, said on CNN.

## Mothers' new malady

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### VARYING RESULTS

Of the three, only the BCSIR had conducted both lead and antibiotic tests on the milk samples of 14 brands. Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission conducted only the lead tests on 11 of the 14 brands. The IPH performed only the antibiotic tests on all the 14 samples.

All three labs were supplied with the samples of the same batch of the 14 brands collected by Bangladesh Food Safety Authority from the markets in the capital and Savar.

Both the BCSIR and the BAEC followed internationally recognised CODEX standard, where the safe limit for lead is 0.02 mcg/kg in pasteurised milk.

According to the BCSIR report, all the milk samples contain lead beyond permissible level -- ranging from 0.021 to 0.134 mcg/kg.

The BAEC test also found lead beyond permissible level, but the range is different -- from 0.061 to 0.339 mcg/kg in eight milk samples. It was within the safe limit in one sample while below detectable limit in two samples.

As for antibiotics, the BCSIR and the IPH found them to be within permissible level in almost all the samples.

According to the CODEX standards, the safe limit of antibiotic in milk is 100 mcg/kg.

The BCSIR tested three types of antibiotics -- Oxytetracycline, Tetracycline and Ciprofloxacin.

The IPH, on the other hand, tested five types of antibiotics -- Oxytetracycline, Tetracycline, Chlortetracycline, Ciprofloxacin and Enrofloxacin.

It found their presence to be in the safe zone in 13 brands. In one brand, Aftab, Oxytetracycline was beyond permissible limit.

After the HC ban, milk production saw a sharp fall as demand fell fast. Failing to sell their milk, many farmers

poured their produce on roads.

Early last month, at least 10 grocers in the capital's Malibagh, Shankar, Farmgate, Mohammadpur, Lalmitia and Jatrabari said sale of packaged milk fell by about 40-50 percent in recent weeks.

However, the situation saw a slight improvement this month.

### THE MILK SAGA

Concerns over the quality of packaged milk of some top brands turned serious after an icddr, b report in May last year said 75 percent of all pasteurised milk available in the local market were unsafe for direct consumption, as they contain coliform bacteria and E. coli, both harmful for health.

Following media reports, a Supreme Court lawyer filed a petition with the High Court, which issued a set of directives on the authorities, including running lab tests.

In the meantime, a series of tests done at top government laboratories found a number of harmful substances, including lead, cadmium and antibiotics, in the packaged milk marketed by some top brands.

These reports sparked a huge outcry, and amid this clamour Dhaka University researchers also detected detergent and antibiotics meant for human consumption in the pasteurised milk of seven leading companies.

And after Bangladesh Food Safety Authority placed a series of test reports before the High Court as per its order, the HC banned production and consumption of packaged milk of 14 brands.

The Supreme Court subsequently lifted the ban, and in a surprise move on July 31, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council said their test in an Indian lab on the milk samples of seven top brands found no heavy metal and antibiotics.

According to market insiders, these seven brands hold more than 90 percent of the total pasteurised milk market in the country.

## A food bank

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The village lies on char lands of the Jamuna basin, where people are mostly dependent on finding work as day labourers to survive. They are able to grow some crops when the water in the river recedes and the char lands are exposed.

Kohinoor, a housewife, and the others set up the food bank last year to meet food demands during times like off-crop periods. She is chairman of the reserve.

When this correspondent visited the village on August 9, he attended one of the meetings of the reserve at the chairman's house along with the other members.

"Early in 2018, a few women of our underprivileged community and I walked back barefoot for a couple of hours after we went to collect relief materials from the local government. However, we were let down as relatives

of the local member-chairman got the relief items instead of us," said Kohinoor, reminiscing the time when the reserve came into being.

"I then called a meeting at home to take matters in my hand and shared my decision to form a food bank."

The community is poor and destitute, but there are some who are needier than the others, she added. "We should do something for them. During hard times, any member can take rice from our bank."

On avoiding total dependence on government support, she said, "We are also trying to gather financial support from other villagers as donations."

Members of this food bank started setting aside whatever little they could manage in 2018. They now have 45 members and their savings crossed Tk 30,000.

"A few days ago, our family fell into a crisis. I borrowed eight kilograms of

rice from the food bank and overcame the crisis," said Aduri Khatun, also a member of the bank.

The bank does not charge any interest for such services, said Shumi Khatun, 28, one of the beneficiaries of the bank.

Another villager, Rajib Siddique, 27, who recently completed his graduation, said, "Kohinoor Khala [aunt] is an inspiration for all of us. Her lone initiative has saved us from extreme hunger."

"The food bank is a laudable example. They can now solve some of their problems from their own resources," said Romjan Ali, chairman of Ghorjan union of the district.

"At least 3,000 families were gravely flood affected in our union and the government budget hardly covered all the victims. In this situation, this type of a food bank is really beneficial," he added.

## AI gaining foothold in universities

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of education at Microsoft Asia while presenting the study.

"We found that three out of four education leaders agree that AI will be able to drive competitiveness in the next three years," he said.

"For many institutions, student performance has a direct impact on rankings. AI can be a tool to help better manage outcomes and ensure continued innovation to optimise operations and enhance student engagements, as it reduces resource-intensive work among faculty and administrative staff," said Nelson.

Some 207 education leaders and 150 education staff from the education sector participated in the study.

Several Asia-Pacific countries, including Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Sri

Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam, were involved in the study.

The study, however, did not provide any country-specific data on AI initiatives.

It identified that the education sector in the Asia-Pacific is currently lagging in data, strategy and investment when compared to Asia Pacific's overall AI readiness.

The study also mentioned that in the next three years, there will be a shortage in the supply of manpower with three skills -- IT skills and programming, digital skills, and quantitative, analytical and statistical skills.

"For institutions that have adopted AI, they are already seeing improvements in the range of 11 percent to 28 percent today in areas such as higher funding, accelerated innovation, higher competitiveness, improve efficiency and better student

engagement," the study said.

"By 2021, education institutions with AI stand to experience the biggest jump in higher funding, which is expected to increase by 3.7x, higher than most industry sectors in the Asia-Pacific," it added.

ASES is an annual leadership event dedicated to the education and skills sector. It is an internationally recognised ministerial forum for debating future practice in education.

The event is participated by leaders, policymakers and key education institution representatives from across Asia to discuss challenges and opportunities in policy formulation and implementation in the sector.

About 300 delegates, including ministers, policymakers and senior education leaders, from 15 countries, including Bangladesh, joined the event.

## Afghanistan vote held

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(IEC), after the voting concluded.

Ten of thousands of Afghans braved the threat of militant attacks and delays at polling booths to vote in the election, a major test of the Western-backed government's ability to protect democracy against Taliban attempts to derail it.

Two policeman and one civilian were killed in mostly small-scale Taliban attacks, the defence ministry said, adding 37 people were injured.

Tens of thousands of troops were deployed to try to protect voters and polling stations.

IEC officials did not immediately share the details on turnout, but Western diplomats in Kabul estimated it was low due to fears of violence and delays caused by polling officials.

Voting was extended by two hours, after technical problems delayed the opening of some polling stations around the country.

Independent election observers and activists said a slow pace to voting triggered confusion at some polling stations, with long queues forming outside.

Some observers feared the Taliban had forced a partial shutdown to upset the final results as the IEC, without giving a reason, said it had failed to establish contact with 901 of the 4,942 polling centres.

The hardline Islamist group, which controls more of the country than at any time since its regime fell in 2001, had warned the more than nine million registered voters to stay at home or face dire consequences.

Yesterday's presidential vote is the fourth since the Taliban was toppled.

Over a dozen candidates are vying for the presidency, led by incumbent Ashraf Ghani and his former deputy Abdullah Abdullah.

The winner will play a crucial role in the country's quest to end the war with the Taliban and any resumption of talks between the militant Islamist group and the United States, which were called off this month.

The Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan said early turnout was "very poor", in part due to the requirement for voters to be photographed, to which female voters in conservative areas objected.

### BCL factions

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Anik is backed by AFM Bahauddin Nasim, organising secretary of Awami League central committee, while Abir is supported by Shahjahan Khan, Member of Parliament from Madaripur-2, locals said, adding the two groups had a long standing feud over establishing supremacy in the area.

Riyad Mahmud, resident medical officer of Madaripur General Hospital, said a total of 35 people were admitted at the hospital.

"We referred 13 of them to Faridpur Medical College Hospital as their condition was critical," he added.

Contacted, Anik and Abir both blamed each other's followers for the incident.