

Ecuador counts cost of deadly protests after deal

AFP, Quito

Ecuador began counting the cost Monday of 12 days of indigenous protests against fuel hikes that left eight demonstrators dead and severely injured President Lenin Moreno's austerity program.

Moreno and indigenous leaders reached an agreement Sunday after the president pledged to withdraw subsidy cuts, known as Decree 883, that had more than doubled fuel prices.

The cuts were part of an austerity package to obtain a \$4.2 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund to shore up the oil exporter's brittle economy.

Moreno wrote on Twitter that the original plan would be replaced by new measures that "contain mechanisms to focus resources on those who need them most."

"These days should teach us to value peace, stability, security," Moreno said in a televised statement on Monday evening.

Under the deal, indigenous umbrella group CONAIE called off protests that brought chaos to the capital and forced Moreno to relocate his government hundreds of miles (kilometers) away to the second city Quayaquil.

Thousands of indigenous people began leaving Quito on Monday in convoys of trucks, returning to communities in the Andes and the Amazon rainforest that they left more than a week ago to vent their outrage at the increases.

The ombudsman's office reported that 1,340 people had been injured in the protests, some of whom were in critical condition, while 1,192 people had been detained.

The protests caused an estimated \$1.5 billion in losses, according to head of the Ecuadorian Business Committee Patricio Alarcon.

Sunday's breakthrough after four hours of talks was announced by an official from the United Nations, which mediated negotiations along with the Catholic Church.

CORRUPTION TRIAL S Africa's Zuma files last-minute appeal

AFP, Pietermaritzburg

South Africa's embattled former president Jacob Zuma will appeal a court ruling that he stand trial on corruption charges, his lawyer said yesterday, in a last-minute move delaying a case over bribery allegations dating back to a 1990s arms deal.

The trial would have been the first time Zuma faced a court on graft charges, despite a string of accusations over his long political career.

The High Court in the southeastern city of Pietermaritzburg last week rejected his request to have charges of fraud, graft and racketeering dismissed, clearing the way for the trial to start yesterday.

But Zuma's lawyer Thabani Masuku told the court at the start of the trial that the ex-president would appeal, dragging on a case that has seen numerous legal twists over 15 years.

"Mr Zuma would like to exercise the full extent of his constitutional rights, which includes the right to appeal," Masuku said.

Release metro rail

FROM PAGE 16

The prime minister also asked the authority to implement the projects without harming Hatirjheel's beauty, sources said.

Talking to reporters at the Secretariat, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said ground work for the two new metro rail lines -- Mass Rapid Transit-1 and Mass Rapid Transit-5 (Northern Route) -- would start soon as funding for the projects has already been settled.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency would provide the lion's share of the costs in soft loans, he said.

He also said the prime minister asked him to start a feasibility study for implementing metro rail projects in Chattogram city. "Following the directive, I have asked the secretary of the ministry

and people involved in the metro rail projects to start the feasibility study as soon as possible," he said.

PROJECTS APPROVED The Ecne approved the proposal for MRT-1 -- from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kamalapur Railway Station -- with a cost of Tk 52,561.43 crore. The 31.24km line will have an elevated section from Notun Bazar to Purbachal.

Officials expect the project to be completed by 2026.

The MRT-5 (northern route), from Hemayetpur of Savar to Bhatara via Gabtoli, Mirpur and Gulshan, has an estimated cost of Tk 41,238.55 crore. The 20km line would have underground and elevated sections.

The project is scheduled to finish by 2028.

Apart from these two projects,

the Ecne meeting yesterday approved eight other projects that cost Tk 6,225 crore.

They include construction of a multi-storied building in Mirpur for government employees for Tk 1,088 crore and multi-storied building at Azimpur for judges for Tk 129 crore.

OTHER DIRECTIVES

The prime minister also asked the authorities concerned not to give any new gas connection to homes and install LPG storage in every building from where gas would be supplied to flats.

She also asked all secretaries to live in government quarters or else the government would not pay their rent, meeting sources said.

She urged all to use nets to prevent mosquitos in government buildings, they said.

Myanmar handed fresh list

FROM PAGE 16

Foreign Minister Momen had a joint meeting with his Chinese and Myanmar counterparts on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

The first meeting of the tripartite working body is scheduled to be held this month.

COASTAL SURVEILLANCE About the coastal surveillance radar system to be provided to Bangladesh by India, the foreign minister yesterday said Bangladesh's relations with China would in no way be affected due to the

installation of the system.

He said many pirates come and take away fisheries resources due to lack of a proper surveillance system. Installation of the radar system would help Bangladesh monitor pirates in a better way, he added.

On October 5, Bangladesh and India inked seven bilateral documents, including an MoU on providing a coastal surveillance system. The documents were signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's official visit to India.

Talking about some foreign diplomats' recent remarks over

the murder of the Buet student Abrar Fahad, the foreign minister yesterday said those comments were "unnecessary".

"There has been an accident and the government has taken very strong actions immediately. This must be recognised. It seems to me that they [diplomats] go beyond their norms," Momen told reporters. Abrar, a second-year student of electrical and electronic engineering department at Buet, was beaten to death on October 7 reportedly by some Chhatra League men at the university's Sher-e-Bangla Hall.

Thailand unveils puppies

FROM PAGE 16

the people may remember late King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Khun Thong Daeng," Kasetsart University said in a statement.

University veterinarians used

semen from the male offspring of Khun Thong Daeng to impregnate two royal dogs. Five puppies were born in June and three in September.

"The eight puppies are healthy,"

the university said of the Basenji hunting dogs.

Khun Thong Daeng died in 2015 and was beloved by many Thais for her loyalty to the late king.

5 sentenced to death

FROM PAGE 16

The other four are Abdul Jabbar Mondal, 89, his two sons Jachijar Rahman alias Khoka, 67, and Abdul Wahed Mondal, 65, and Montaz Alia Bepari alias Momtaz, 71.

All of them are from Gaibandha Sadar upazila and were involved with Jamaat-e-Islami, an anti-liberation party, during the war, according to the case documents.

The three-member tribunal, led by its Chairman Justice Md Shahinur Islam and members Justice Amir Hossain and Justice Md Abu Ahmed Jamadar, asked the Inspector General of Police to take effective, prompt and appropriate measures to arrest the fugitives.

According to the case documents, Jabbar, a village quack, was an active member of Jamaat in 1971 and was involved in forming local Peace the Committee and Razakar Bahini. He was the commander of his union's Razakar Bahini.

Other convicts were also active members of Jamaat and Razakar Bahini and committed crimes during the Liberation War, according to the prosecution.

"Mode of their participation in perpetrating the crimes was indeed full of deliberate aggression," the tribunal said while delivering the 167-page verdict.

"Taking all these factors into

account we are of the view that the wheels of justice must move not only to halt the culture of impunity but also for healing the immense trauma and untold wound the victims and sufferers sustained."

Prosecutor Mukhlesur Rahman Badal expressed satisfaction over the judgment, saying that the victims' families got solace after a long time.

However, state-appointed defence counsel Abul Hasan said he would advise his client to file an appeal with the Supreme Court.

According to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, a war crimes convict can file an appeal with the SC within 30 days from the date of verdict delivery.

With the latest judgement, the war crimes tribunals have so far delivered 40 verdicts against 94 people. Of them, 68 have been sentenced to death.

CHARGES, PUNISHMENT

The tribunal found all the five convicts guilty of killing two Hindus and torturing others and gave them the death penalty.

According to the charge, the five, along with Pakistan army members, and fellow Razakars attacked the Hindu-dominated Bishnapur village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila in the first half of June 1971 and

caught, tortured several people, killed two Hindus, and forced 300 to 400 other Hindus of Shahapara union to leave the country.

Four accused, except Ranju, were sentenced to death for shooting eight people dead.

The convicts, along with Pakistan army and other Razakars, launched an attack in Nandina village of the same upazila on October 18 in 1971 and shot eight people dead and destroyed 40 to 50 houses, read the second charge.

According to the third charge, the four convicts with their fellow Razakars and army men carried out an attack in Daulatpur and killed five on the same day. They were given the death penalty for this too.

The five convicts on the same day launched a systematic attack in Nandina and Daulatpur and caught non-combatant freedom fighter Abul Kashem from Nandina and tortured him by hanging him with a tree. He was forced to drink urine. Later, he was shot dead, according to the fourth charge.

Besides, they killed six other non-combatant freedom fighters, added the charge.

They were handed the death penalty for this. However, death sentences would naturally be merged, the tribunal said.

Tk 4,500cr 'vanishes'

FROM PAGE 16

Tk 4,500 crore was swindled out of BASIC bank, once a healthy public bank, when Bacchu was its chairman.

"For that reason, the government removed him from the post, but Bacchu was not made accused in any of the 56 cases filed over the BASIC Bank loan scam," he said, adding the ACC's accountability was essential in this regard.

ACC Secretary Dilwar Bakht, however, yesterday told the media that he could not understand the reason behind the demand for resignation of Commission Chairman Iqbal Mahmood.

Talking to journalists at his office, he said investigators were the ones looking into the matter, so the commissioners or chairman are not responsible for any failure.

"Therefore, it is not understandable why the question of resignation was brought up," he added.

Asked why Bacchu had not been chargesheeted in any of the cases, the ACC secretary said no one could be implicated until the money or its whereabouts were found.

"Once we get answers to the questions -- where did the money go, how was it converted and who was behind it -- we will submit a charge-sheet against those responsible," said Bakht.

He also claimed that the swindled money was not transferred to any account, but rather withdrawn in cash in phases.

NZ universities face fines after dorm death

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand universities and dorm accommodation providers were told yesterday they could face hefty fines following a gruesome case in which a student's decomposing body lay undetected in his room for weeks.

Education Minister Chris Hipkins said the teenager's fate, which emerged last month, showed voluntary standards aimed at caring for students in halls of residence had failed.

"Had the money been kept in any bank account, then it could have been traced," he said.

In July 2017, the High Court ordered the ACC to look into the alleged involvement of Bacchu and other directors in the scam.

Disappointed at the sluggish probe and the ACC's failure to catch the big fish, the HC, during a hearing last year, said, "We have to cover our faces in shame."

In line with the directive, Bacchu was quizzed five times. The Commission also questioned all the directors of the then board.

The central bank, in its probe report, detailed how borrowers embezzled money from the state lender through fake companies and suspicious accounts.

The 47-page report, which includes list of borrowers, gives a detailed account of how the loans were approved and then withdrawn in clear violations of bank rules.

The report said BASIC Bank's board and its credit committee at the headquarters ignored the negative observations from the bank's branches on a number of loan proposals, and approved those without following due diligence.

The report was sent to ACC in 2014.

Man killed

FROM PAGE 16

Ali, former chairman of the same union parishad, over establishing supremacy in the area. Both of them are also activists of AL's Debgram union unit.

As a sequel to the conflict, Md Bokul, son of Hafizur, and Sirazul, son of Ator, locked in an altercation during the council held at Debgram Government Primary School.

At one stage, the men of both rivals attacked each other with lethal weapons, leaving at least 21 people injured.

Of the injured, Karim died on the way to Faridpur Medical College Hospital.

Karim was a relative of Hafizur. Hafizur alleged that Ator, along with his son and supporters killed Karim.

Rabiul Islam, officer-in-charge of Goalanda police station, said the clash took place during the council and detained three supporters of Ator Ali from the spot in connection with the murder.

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Strong interpersonal skills and ability to work empathetically with young adults is essential. Experience of undertaking similar previous assignments would be beneficial.

Application Procedure

Interested parties are invited to download a copy of the candidate prospectus from <https://www.bracu.ac.bd/about/career-at-bracu>. To apply please send a covering letter of application addressing the requirements of the person specification mentioned in the prospectus and a copy of your CV to: dc1-hrd@bracu.ac.bd

Application deadline: 31 October 2019

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Strong interpersonal skills and ability to work with a diverse group of colleagues and external stakeholders is essential. Experience of undertaking similar previous assignments would be beneficial.

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Atwood and Evaristo

FROM PAGE 16

The 79-year-old Atwood, who wore a badge of climate activist group Extinction Rebellion, held aloft the arm of her fellow winner as they walked to the podium together.

"I'm very surprised, I would have thought I would have been too elderly," said Atwood, who was honoured for her best-selling sequel to her 1985 dystopian classic "The Handmaid's Tale".

"I don't need the attention, so I'm very glad that you're getting some," she said to Evaristo, joking that as "a good Canadian, we don't do famous, we think it is in bad taste, so it would have been embarrassing if I'd been alone here".

Evaristo responded that it was "so incredible to share this with Margaret Atwood, who is such a legend.

"I am the first black woman to win this prize," she added, to cheers from the audience.

She late told reporters she was "happy to share it, I'm a sharing person," adding the prize money would go on paying off her mortgage.

The title of best work of English-language fiction published in the United Kingdom and Ireland has launched careers and courted controversy since its creation in 1969.

Past laureates have ranged from celebrated writers such as Ian McEwan and Julian Barnes to Kazuo Ishiguro and Roddy Doyle.

Paul Beatty became the first American winner when the Booker bowed to pressure and began including authors from outside the British commonwealth, Ireland and Zimbabwe in 2013.

This year's shortlist featured six novelists -- four of them women -- born across four continents.

The five-judge panel included the writer-broadcaster Afua Hirsch and the British-Chinese novelist and filmmaker Xiaolu Guo.

Of Atwood's novel, chair of judges Peter Florence said the panel "loves this examination of complicity and resilience and resistance, we love the language and the story-telling power, we love the ambition."