



Algerian protesters carry portraits of late Algeria's revolutionary Abane Ramdane during an anti-government demonstration in the capital Algiers, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

China denies detained Uighur academic was sentenced to death

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday denied that detained Uighur academic Tashpolat Tiyip was secretly tried and sentenced to death, after UN experts demanded answers from Beijing.

The foreign ministry said former Xinjiang University president Tiyip's case was still ongoing and his rights had been "protected in accordance with the law".

Tiyip was "suspected of corruption and bribery," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a regular briefing Friday.

Amnesty International said in September that it feared Tiyip, a prominent geographer, faced imminent execution after being "convicted in a secret and grossly unfair trial".

Tiyip was believed to have been convicted of "separatism" after being "forcibly disappeared" in 2017, although little information was available about his detention, according to Amnesty International.

A group of United Nations special rapporteurs said Thursday in an article published by the UN that they were concerned by the uncertainty surrounding Tiyip's trial and the charges he faced.

The experts said they had asked Beijing for clarification on Tiyip's current location and situation and also

called for his family to be allowed to visit him.

China has faced international condemnation for rounding up an estimated one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic minorities in internment camps in the northwestern region of Xinjiang.

Beijing initially denied the existence of the Xinjiang camps, but now says they are "vocational training centres" necessary to combat terrorism.

The UN experts said that "incommunicado detention, enforced disappearances and secret trials have no place in a country governed by the rule of law".

Geng on Friday hit back, saying China urges the UN to "avoid interfering in countries' internal affairs, and avoid interfering in countries' judicial sovereignty".

Tiyip is among many Uighur intellectuals who have disappeared from public and whom rights groups fear face persecution from the Chinese government.

In October, the European Parliament awarded a top human rights prize to jailed former economics professor Ilham Tohti.

Tohti's daughter Jewher Ilham, who accepted the prize on his behalf in December, said she did not even know if her father was still alive.

Netherlands

FROM PAGE 16 reports Dutch News. It was unveiled last month by Dutch trade minister Sigrid Kaag.

The current tourism site, Holland.com, is still using the slogan "this is Holland" alongside an orange tulip.

Holland is a region of the Netherlands that includes the well-known Dutch cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague.

The new strategy is also understood to be focusing on sustainable tourism by looking at longer-stay visitors to cities beyond capital Amsterdam.

In May, the Dutch tourist board said it would stop actively promoting the Netherlands as a tourist destination because of concerns that its cities and attractions are becoming overcrowded.

The country's tourist numbers are anticipated to grow from 19 million now to 29 million over the next decade - and the country's authorities do not necessarily see that as an entirely good thing.

"To control visitor flow and leverage the opportunities that tourism brings with it, we must act now," the country's tourist board said in a strategy document laying out its plan for the coming decade.

"Instead of destination promotion, it is now time for destination management."

Amsterdam in particular struggles with overtourism. It receives around 17 million visitors a year, compared to just 1 million residents.

Groups combating overtourism, such as Untourist Amsterdam, have been set up - one of its initiatives include marrying an Amsterdammer, designed to bring locals and visitors closer together.

The Independent has contacted Holland.com for further comment.

Tensions rise as rival camps

FROM PAGE 16 "They want to drive out the poor, Muslims and those who don't agree with them," protester Muntazir Bashir told AFP.

Heavy-handed police tactics have fuelled anger, with many accusing authorities of arbitrary force against dissenters.

The northern state of Uttar Pradesh, where 20 percent of the population are Muslims, witnessed the worst violence, with 19 people killed, mostly from gunshot wounds.

Officials yesterday said they have suspended mobile internet and SMS services in 21 districts out of 75 including the state capital Lucknow.

Access to data on cellphones was only restored in many areas on Tuesday following a week-long cutoff in a country that activists say is the world leader in snapping internet access.

The protests in Uttar Pradesh, whose chief minister is a Hindu monk from Modi's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party, are among the biggest there in decades.

State police have arrested more than

1,000 people and taken more than 5,000 others into preventive custody, some of them as young as 16 according to media. Around 200 people have been ordered to pay compensation for damage caused to public property during the protests.

More than 100 people have also been booked over social media posts deemed to be objectionable or misleading, with tens of thousands of messages on Twitter, Facebook and other platforms reported.

Authorities are keeping a close eye on foreigners with a Norwegian tourist saying she was told to leave India after participating in a protest in the southern state of Kerala.

This week a German student was also ejected after taking part in demonstrations in the southern city of Chennai, according to media reports.

Photos on social media purportedly of the student, named as Jakob Lindenthal, showed him carrying a placard saying "1933-1945 We have been there", in reference to his country's Nazi past.

Raushan could not be reached for comments after several attempts.

After the demise of HM Ershad on July 14, both Raushan and Quader were at loggerheads over who would become the JP chairman and leader of the opposition.

Later, Quader was declared as the JP chairman, an appointment opposed by Raushan's faction.

Factions of Raushan and GM Quader, after several meetings in September, came to an understanding that Quader would remain the chairperson, while Raushan would be the opposition leader.

Around 12,000 delegates, including 4,000 councillors from 74 organisational districts, are expected to participate in the council where the party's new leadership would be elected.

JP creates new post

FROM PAGE 16 party to be held at the city's Institution of Engineers today.

"Although Raushan madam will hold the party's number one post, it will be an honorary post," a JP presidium member told The Daily Star last night.

The party's existing chairman GM Quader will actually operate the party remaining at its helm, he said.

"Raushan madam will be made the chief patron of the party to give her the highest honour on behalf of the party as she is the wife of our late chairman and the party founder HM Ershad," SM Faysal Chisty, a JP presidium member, told The Daily Star.

The presidium meeting's decision to amend the charter is expected to be approved in today's council, JP insiders said.

According to JP sources, GM Quader and top leaders loyal to him are apparently behind the latest move that was taken to fortify Quader's leadership through incorporating his rivals.

Anisul Islam Mahmud, Mujibul Haque Chunnun, Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Kazi Feroz Rashid, Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, Salma Islam and Abu Hossain Babla have been picked for the posts of seven co-chairmen.

Of them, Anisul, Chunnun and Hawlader are known to be loyal to Raushan.

Leaders for the posts of eight additional secretary generals will be selected later, party sources said.

"Quader wants to tighten his grip on the party through the council. But Raushan madam can throw a strong challenge at the council," said a JP presidium member loyal to Raushan.

2 killed

FROM PAGE 16 and the truck are still missing, the fire official said, adding that the accident also killed as much as 210 goats onboard, Liton said.

The truck was heading to Dhaka from Joypurhat. When the truck reached Jorjor area near Hemayetpur bus stand around 3:00am, the driver lost control and ended up in a roadside pond, the fire official said, quoting eyewitnesses.

Rescuers recovered the two bodies and were scouring the pond for the missing people while this report was being filed last night.

The bodies were sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue, Liton said, adding that victims' families were informed.

On this day

FROM PAGE 16 of Bengali intellectuals. He found similarity between the genocide in Bangladesh with Indonesia, Jordan and Congo genocides which were conducted under the supervision of US intelligence. He alleges against few Pakistan generals including Niazi for the genocide. He says, "The Al-Badr assassins must have to be brought to daylight before they mingle in the general crowd. This country has lost her best intellectuals in their hands. These animals need to be punished." A few journalists proposed to build a monument in the killing grounds in Dhaka.

12 countries will shortly recognise Bangladesh, a report of Akashbani says. Another 20 countries are in the queue. Abu Sayed Chowdhury, representative of Bangladesh, successfully receives the response and assistance from Yugoslavia, Russia, Great Britain, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and a few others.

More collaborators arrested, a news from APB says: Maolana Nuruzzaman, former chairman of PP, Abdul Wadud, advocate from Siddique Bazar, Firoz Sirazi, a spy from Dhaka, Nayek Subadar Azab Khan, a spy, Intiza Hossain from Mirpur, Sami Ahmad Siddiqui from Sutrapur, Hamid Ali Dewan from Moghbazar, Md Anisur Rahman, member of Al-Badr in Pabna, Md Ezaz Hossain from Mirpur, Mostaq Ahmad from Mirpur and Ezaz Ahmad from Mohammadpur.

A search party is in action to find out the missing intellectuals, a source from Sutrapur Police Station says.

12 die in Kazakh plane crash

FROM PAGE 16 uninhabited two-storey house near the city's boundary northeast of the airport.

Kazakhstan responded to the crash by grounding the Fokker model, which makes up the whole of the Bek Air fleet, and launched an investigation.

The country's emergencies committee released a list of 12 people who died, including the captain.

The health ministry said 53 people had been injured, nine of them children, adding that 10 of the adults were in critical condition.

Most onboard were Kazakhs but the injured also included citizens of China, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine.

Ukraine's embassy in Kazakhstan said two of its nationals had spinal injuries but their lives were not in danger.

Neighbouring Kyrgyzstan's foreign ministry said its representatives had visited a Kyrgyz woman injured in the crash and her condition was "satisfactory".

China and Russia, Kazakhstan's main political allies, were among those that sent official condolences, along with Pope Francis.

Deputy Prime Minister Roman Sklyar said the plane's tail had touched the runway twice during takeoff.

"Either this is a pilot error, or there were technical reasons," Sklyar said at a press conference in Almaty.

"The aircraft split into two parts. Most of the passengers who died were in the front part."

Russia's pro-Kremlin REN TV channel broadcast what it said was a recording of communications between an air traffic controller at Almaty airport and the Bek Air crew.

Soon after takeoff, the air traffic controller appeared to lose touch with the pilot and warned the next plane to delay its takeoff.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev pledged to provide families of the victims with compensation and tweeted that those responsible "will be severely punished in accordance with the law."

Tokayev also said a government commission had been set up to investigate the circumstances of the crash.

The president's office declared a national day of mourning today.

The interior ministry said it had also launched a criminal investigation into the incident over violations of air transport safety rules.

While the plane was built in 1996, it had passed safety checks in May, Kazakh authorities said.

The industry ministry said in a statement that the Fokker 100 model, which is no longer manufactured, would be grounded until the cause of the accident became clear.

Bek Air describes itself on its website as Kazakhstan's first low-cost airline.

In March 2016, a Bek Air Fokker 100 plane with 116 passengers made an emergency landing in Nur-Sultan after its landing gear failed to deploy but no one was injured.

Swiss regional carrier Helvetic Airways phased out its Dutch-built Fokker-100s earlier this year after 15 years of service.

"I'm alive and well"

The first eight victims died at the scene of the disaster, two then died while being treated at the airport and two in hospital.

Those confirmed dead included the captain Marat Muratbayev, as well as Rustam Kaidarov, a 79-year-old retired general, and 35-year-old Dana Kruglova, a journalist from the private Infornburo news agency.

Infornburo said Kruglova "had wanted to celebrate the New Year with her parents in Nur-Sultan and decided to take this flight".

A well-known entrepreneur, Aslan Nazaraliyev, posted on Facebook that he had survived, indicating his seat on a photo of the crashed aircraft, right next to where it had split into two.

"Thanks to Allah, I am alive and well," Nazaraliyev wrote.

The air route between Almaty and Nur-Sultan became Kazakhstan's most popular after the chilly steppe city replaced the southern financial hub as national capital in 1997.

NGOs asked

FROM PAGE 16 Tracts, the word adivasi/indigenous is also a threat to the national security," it adds.

Contacted, Naresh Chandra Oran, executive director of Adivasi Samaj Unnayan Sangstha of Natore, said he recently received the letter from the Bureau.

"This is nothing but an insult to the indigenous people. I will not change the word even if my NGO's licence is cancelled," said Naresh.

Nikhil Mitra Chakma, executive director of Society for Integrated Women Progress, said, "We changed the name of our NGO, Society for Indigenous Women Progress, in 2014 under pressure from some government agencies."

Most of the NGOs from Chattogram Hill Tracts, having the word "indigenous" in their titles, dropped the word in 2014 under pressure from government agencies, he alleged.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Anwar Hossain, deputy secretary of NGO Affairs Bureau, yesterday said, "We issued the letter as the word 'indigenous' conflicts with our constitution."

However, eminent lawyer Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua termed the move "total violation of constitutional provisions".

"No government official or ministry can explain the terminology of the constitution. Only the Supreme Court has jurisdiction over interpreting any terminological or constitutional word," he told this newspaper.

Left out in the cold

FROM PAGE 16 to shield her tiny legs with a corner of her scarf.

"We've been in Dhaka for about two years. I work at a scrap-metal recycling shop...I have lost all my belongings in the fire," lamented Bokula.

Almost everybody interviewed said that they had moved to the Dhaka in the past few years for a better life. They had slowly saved up enough to buy furniture.

A child named Zakir walked around the ruins of what was once his home, trying to collect scrap metal to sell. He waded through the pools of water left behind by the firefighters and stuck his hands deep into the wet mulch to dig out knick-knacks. "I found a knife we used to own," he

showed. None of the other objects he found were discernible.

How much will what he salvaged sell for, he was asked. "Twenty taka," he replied quietly, fiddling with a burnt and splintered yo-yo.

Mohammed Zilani and Mosammah Rahima Begum were also digging around the ruins of their house trying to collect scrap metal. They both work as sweepers. They have been married for four and a half years, and had painstakingly saved up enough to buy a bed, a refrigerator and a TV. "You're actually standing on my refrigerator," she ironically pointed out, while listing out all that she had lost.

Cash losses were also rampant. Most of the residents, who saved part of their earnings, kept the cash at

home.

Rahima lost Tk 45,000 that she intended to send to her village home. Sixteen-year-old Jhama's family lost Tk 1.5 lakh they had saved to send her to Jordan as a migrant worker.

"My father is paralysed and my mother has to look after my younger siblings. I am the only one who has a full-time job. I had thought of going to Jordan because the garment factories there pay more than my factory here," she said.

A dairy cow and her calf were burnt to death.

Abdul Fazal Miah, the owner lamented, "The cow used to give us 10 litres of milk each day. I tried several times to unchain her and get her out but failed."

Buddhist, Jain and Christian migrants who have fled persecution in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan when there are also large numbers of Muslims of different sects enduring intolerance in the "three selected countries".

With its action, the India government has made religious minorities in the three countries more vulnerable than before, they said.

The act has the potential to deepen geopolitical divides among the countries of South Asia at a time when they should be striving for peace and mutual understanding, the statement said.

"The signatories believe that India's plans for growth and equity will be hurt by ill-advised attempts at social engineering, which will in turn also impact the population of the larger South Asian region."

Geopolitical divides

FROM PAGE 16 photographer Shahidul Alam, Nepali writer Kanak Mani Dixit, and Pakistani nuclear physicist Pervez Hoodbhoy.

Other signatories are: Mahesh Maskey, Nayantrara Gurung Kakshapati and Prayutsh Onta of Nepal; Arif Hasan, Beena Sarwar, A Rehman, and Mubashir Hasan of Pakistan; and Jayadeva Uyangoda and Sumathy Sivamohan of Sri Lanka.

"The act is discriminatory at the first instance because it targets Muslims beyond the stated intent of the law. It is unacceptable for any country including one with a secular constitution to distinguish between citizens, foreign or domestic, on the basis of religion," the statement said.

They questioned the Indian government's logic behind wanting to offer citizenship to Hindu, Parsi, Sikh,

home.

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