

Liberia pledges to block anti-govt protest

AFP, Monrovia

The Liberian government on Saturday said it would not allow an anti-government protest in the capital Monrovia before the end of January, as opposition groups insisted it would go ahead.

Opponents have called for the protest in the capital Monrovia today as the impoverished country grapples with a deep economic crisis.

KSA arrests

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ever to be hosted in the kingdom.

Police did not offer any further details, including the duration of the detentions.

This marked the first such mass crackdown since de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman began easing social restrictions in the ultra-conservative kingdom, lifting decades-long bans on cinemas and women drivers while allowing gender-mixed concerts and sporting extravaganzas.

The relaxed social norms have been welcomed by many Saudis, two-thirds of whom are under 30.

But in September, Saudi Arabia said it would penalise violations of "public decency", including wearing immodest clothing and public displays of affection, after the austere kingdom began issuing tourist visas for the first time.

Men and women must avoid "tight-fitting clothing" or clothes with "profane language or images", read an instruction on an English language website launched by the tourism authority.

"Women should cover shoulders and knees in public," it added.

The public decency guidelines, first approved by cabinet in April, are widely perceived to be vague and have sparked public concern that they would be open to interpretation.

They have also stoked fears of a revival of morality policing.

Saudi Arabia's religious police once elicited widespread fear, chasing men and women out of malls to pray and berating anyone seen mingling with the opposite sex.

But the bearded enforcers of public morality, whose powers have been clipped in recent years, are now largely out of sight.

Kaikaus

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Administration Cadre of Bangladesh Civil Service in 1986.

He has worked at different levels of field administration and worked on deputation in several organisations, including Directorate of Accommodation, Department of Narcotics Control and Bangladesh Services Limited.

I'm cautiously

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The Gambia is seeking provisional measures to protect the Rohingya from further violence in Rakhine and to hold Myanmar accountable for the alleged genocide against its Rohingya minority, in a watershed legal battle that took place between December 10 to 12 at the Hague in the Netherlands.

Bangladesh officials said that the Hague based principal judicial organ of the United Nations -- the ICJ -- usually gives its decision four to six weeks after a hearing.

The Gambia, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, filed a case at the ICJ.

The prosecutor of the ICC is conducting an investigation into the alleged crimes against humanity and persecution against the Rohingyas.

The move came more than two years after some 7,50,000 Rohingyas fled a brutal military campaign in Rakhine and took shelter in Bangladesh.

At the programme, Shahidul Haque said that the Rohingya crisis is a long-term one and is a mix of humanitarian, human rights and geopolitical crises.

While talking about setting up barbed-wire fences around the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, Shahidul said that the government wants to know who are entering and exiting the camp at the dead of night. "That is the rationale, we are not curtailing their right to move. We want to set up designated entry and exit points at the camp", he added.

On the issue of radicalisation among the Rohingyas refugees, Shahidul said some of them (refugees) are dealing with such a crisis for the first time. "We are, as a state, very nervous. We do not know what this particular population will do to us in 15 years' time."

"We have to deal the issue jointly with the international community", he added.

At the programme, discussants thanked the Gambia for taking Myanmar to court. They also thanked Canada and the Netherlands for supporting the Gambia in the legal battle.

The director of the Centre for Genocide Studies in DU Professor Intiaz Ahmed, Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Benoit Préfontaine, Deputy Ambassador of the Netherlands in Dhaka Jeroen Steeghs, Liberation War Museum Trustee Mofidul Hoque and others spoke at the discussion.



A pro-democracy protester waves flag on top of a car park during a gathering at Edinburgh Place in the Central district of Hong Kong yesterday. Hong Kong has been battered by more than six months of protests that has upended the financial hub's reputation for stability and helped tip the city into recession.

PHOTO: AFP

Deeds of a deed writer

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job as a deed writer at the sub-registrar office in 1999.

This was the beginning of his rise.

A year after Awami League government assumed power in 2008, Nasir formed an association of deed writers in his upazila and became the general secretary of the association that had three other members. He established himself under the patronage of local politicians.

Following a story in a Bangla national daily on the existing corruption at the sub-registrar's office on November 26, the ACC began the investigation into him.

ADDITIONAL FIVE PERCENT

According to the government rules, the cost of land registration is nine

percent of the value of the land at the union level and 10 percent at the municipality level.

But in Kaliganj upazila, locals would have to bear an additional five percent for registration and other expenses.

This practice was introduced by Nasir, and if any other deed writer would try to protest, they would be threatened that their licence would be cancelled, said members, seeking anonymity.

When asked, Sub-Registrar Amina Begun of Kaliganj said she was unaware of such extra charges. She was not available for any further comment, despite repeated attempts.

Shariful Islam of Shabaria village in

the upazila said, "I recently went to the Kaliganj upazila sub registrar's office for land registration. I knew that I had to bear a cost of nine percent of total land price, but I had to pay 14 percent. This is nothing but corruption."

Nazmus Sardar, deputy director of ACC in Jessore, said Nasir is currently under investigation to know the source of his wealth. "If proven guilty, action will be taken against him."

The Daily Star learnt that Nasir has deposited around Tk 3 crores in different bank accounts, which are operated by him and some of his family members. This correspondent has collected these account numbers and statements.

Apart from cash, Nasir has four

apartments, a bungalow and around 60 bighas of land in the upazila.

Contacted, Nasir told The Daily Star that some rivals were spreading propaganda against him. "The local assistant commissioner (land) has investigated my property and found that I only have 10 bighas of land," he added.

However, Jhenaidah AC (land) Bhupali Sarkar said her office didn't conduct any survey on Nasir's land.

Regarding his bank balance, Nasir said he did not commit any crime. "Rather, I earned the money legally through deed writing."

Contacted, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Suborna Rani Saha said action would be taken against Nasir if she receives any written complaint.

Skilled here is not skilled

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The current trend of sending workers abroad shows that the number of migrant workers would be about 10 percent less than last year's, says the report.

Some 7.34 lakh workers went for overseas jobs last year, it says, referring to the data of Bureau of Manpower, Training and Employment.

On this declining trend, Prof Tasneem said a reason for this could be suspension of hiring Bangladeshi workers by Malaysia since September last year.

Until November this year, around 97,430 female workers went abroad, it said, adding that the average age of female migrants is 27, and 70 percent of them are married. The rest are divorcees or widows.

Of the total workers, 59.6 percent or 3.6 lakh migrated to Saudi Arabia alone.

About 89 percent workers went to the Middle Eastern countries, and a large number of the remaining 11 percent to Southeast Asian countries.

The report says the government is likely to receive an estimated \$18.19 billion in remittance this year, an increase of 17.05 percent from last year's \$16.67 billion.

Of the amount, the highest 19.87 percent came from Saudi Arabia followed by 14.99 percent from the UAE, it says.

This year, top four migrant-sending districts were Cumilla, Brahmanbaria, Chattogram, and Tangail, it adds.

The report mentions that the unwanted repatriation of female migrant workers from Saudi Arabia was an important issue throughout the year.

But there is no exact figure of the returnees, it says.

Also, some 21,000 male workers were deported by Saudi Arabia in the

first 10 months of this year, the report says.

Besides, some 152 Bangladeshis returned home from war-torn Libya with the help of the government.

The government took some steps, including introducing two percent incentive for sending remittance through legal channel, and the mandatory "Prabashi Kormi Bima" insurance for migrant workers.

The expatriates' welfare ministry issued a set of directives to ensure safety for female migrant workers.

Some 3,668 bodies of migrant workers were received at airports by the Wage Earners' Welfare Board until this November.

Prabashi Kallyan Bank disbursed loans of Tk 105.49 crore to 7,115 people, mostly for labour migration.

The report also recommends that the government bring brokers or middlemen under a registration process to ensure their accountability.

Turkish military plane arrives to evacuate Somalia bomb victims

AFP, Mogadishu

A Turkish military plane yesterday arrived in Mogadishu to evacuate those gravely wounded in a devastating bombing that killed 79 people and overwhelmed local health services, in the latest attack on a city dogged by insecurity.

The aircraft also brought doctors to help treat the some 125 people injured in Saturday's blast, which happened when a vehicle packed with explosives detonated at a busy security checkpoint.

Moroccans rally in support of journo detained over tweet

AFP, Rabat

Hundreds of people demonstrated Saturday outside Morocco's parliament demanding the release of a journalist detained for criticising a judge in a tweet.

Omar Radi, 33, was detained Thursday in Casablanca and immediately put on trial for the tweet about a judge prosecuting protest leaders, his lawyer said.

If found guilty of insulting a magistrate the journalist could be sentenced to up to one year in jail. The next hearing is set for January 2, according to Radi's lawyer Said Benhammani.

Outside parliament crowds of supporters chanted "Free Omar", accused the government of "corruption" and said judges were "at the order" of authorities.

Radi's case has sparked an uproar

as well among local and international human rights group who have denounced increased attacks on human rights and individual freedoms in Morocco.

"Radi's unjustified detention and trial comes amidst an increasingly suffocating atmosphere for Moroccan journalists, dissidents, and artists who speak out on social media," Human Rights Watch's Sarah Leah Whitson said.

"If you express your dissatisfaction of the government on YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter, you risk jail in Morocco. Not great for a country that still postures as a 'liberal exception' in the Arab world."

Whitson said Radi, an award-winning journalist and human rights activist, should be released, adding that the case against him "reeks of political vengeance" against his work.

Bombs rock DU campus

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Saddam Hossain said, "This could be an act of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal members who were deprived of posts in the new committee... This incident needs to be investigated."

Rakibul Islam Rakib, convener of university JCD, said that he didn't want to blame anybody until the university administration found out who the culprits were.

"Finding out the culprits should not be difficult as there are many CCTV cameras around the place," he added.

Senior officials from Dhaka Metropolitan Police visited the spot in the morning.

A tense situation has been prevailing on the campus since

December 22 following the attack on Ducus Vice President Nurul Haque Nur and his allies.

The CCTV footage of the incident had "mysteriously" disappeared from the room of Ducus administrative officer.

WE WANT FOOTAGE

A faction of Ducus members elected under BCL panel demanded the CCTV footage of the attack on Ducus leaders.

At the BCL press conference, at Ducus building, they placed a six-point demand including the withdrawal of "false cases" filed against BCL leaders and activists.

They claimed that BCL leaders and activists had no connection with the attack.

Female astronaut

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yet. Her return is scheduled for February 2020, meaning that she will have been on board the ISS for just 12 days fewer than the US record of 340 days that her colleague Scott Kelly was in space.

Whitson is still the holder of the record for the longest time spent in space over a series of missions, having spent nearly 666 days away from Earth over the course of five flights. The all-time record for one space flight is 438 days and was set by cosmonaut Valeri Polyakov in 1995.

Speaking as 28 December arrived and her record was set, Koch said that she hoped her achievements would be inspiring to others who hoped to follow her. And she said that she hopes her record is broken as soon as possible again, as humanity looks to push more boundaries further in space.

"Do what scares you. Everyone should think about what intrigues them and what draws them in," she said during a live interview with CNN from the space station.

"Those things can kind of be scary a little bit, but they usually mean that you're interested. And if it's just outside what you think is attainable for you and you reach it, it really pays dividends in more ways than one. It can be rewarding for you personally, and it usually means that you're giving something back to the world in the maximum way possible."

On this day

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Muktibahini, Allied Force, government officials and civilians.

They also request the president to entomb the bodies lying at Rayerbazar.

Mother Teresa meets president Syed Nazrul Islam. She discusses making a residence for the Biranganas.

She receives warm felicitations from the president for her extended helping hands to the refugees.

NRC India's

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read the press release.

The conference also discussed on effective implementation of the Comprehensive Border Management Plan (CBMP) for smooth border management and resolving border related problems.

Shafeenul told the press conference that the BGB would continue to work to prevent illegal crossings into India.

Shafeenul, heading an 11-member BGB delegation, is now in India for the DG-level border talks with their counterparts the Border Security Force (BSF).

Asked about the provisions of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that seeks to grant Indian citizenship to persecuted non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the BGB chief said he would not like to make any comment on it.

Replying to a question on the death of a BSF jawan allegedly by a BGB trooper along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal in October, Shafeenul said it was an unfortunate, unwarranted and unexpected incident.

"An inquiry is still on...we will take necessary steps," he added.

BSF DG V K Johri said the incident was unwarranted and unfortunate and that "there are lessons to be learnt."

"We are preparing a detailed standard operating procedure in the wake of this incident that took place along the riverine border along Bangladesh," Johri said.

BBPL resumes

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intensity.

A fixture between the bottom two sides on the points table -- Sylhet Thunder and Rangpur Rangers -- will kick off today's proceedings while the night match will pit the second placed Rajshahi Royals against Dhaka Platoon.

Rajshahi, with five wins in six games, are just behind Chattogram Challengers, who have six wins in eight games. Khulna Tigers are in third position with five wins in seven games while Dhaka Platoon are in fourth position with four wins in seven matches.

Sylhet and Rangpur have managed to win only one match in the seven and six fixtures they have respectively played so far and so, both sides will be desperate for a win today.

Shane Watson led Rangpur in their previous match, which was a 52-run loss to Khulna. Therefore, the Australian all-rounder will surely be looking to turn things around for the club, who have suffered both on and off the field throughout the tournament.

Likewise, Sylhet has been below par till now and could turn to their West Indian recruits for salvation with the likes of Andre Fletcher, who scored the first two centuries hit so far in the tournament, and Johnson Charles being in fine form.

Andre Russell's Rajshahi have remained a solid unit with Liton Das, Afif Hossain, Shoaib Malik and the skipper himself having performed well during their 15-run win over Cumilla Warriors in their previous game.

Meanwhile, despite winning four matches, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's Dhaka have yet to find the perfect combination. Their dashing opener, Tamim Iqbal, who scored two fifties and a few thirty odd innings, is yet to flourish since making his return to professional cricket following a long break.

However, this has allowed all-rounder Mahedi Hasan to remain as the star player for Dhaka both with the bat and ball and so, today should feature an interesting battle.

Bid to reorganise party falls flat

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for councils. They handpick leaders. But the grassroots leaders don't accept this," a senior leader told The Daily Star.

In Madaripur, for example, a convening committee formed in July was asked to hold a council in three months and form a full-fledged committee.

Instead of doing that, the convener Zafar Ali allegedly formed committees in eight units of the district with his own people.

Member secretary of the convening committee Jahandar Ali Jahan alleged that he was not aware of the committees being formed and complained to the central leaders. Eventually, the central office suspended all new committees in the district.

The BNP is in similar limbo in many districts, leaders alleged.

Moreover, as per the party charter, the convener and member secretary of a convening committee can't be the president or general secretary of the full-fledged committee.

"It is a major barrier in reorganising the party. No one wants to make room for others. The longer they remain in the convening posts, the more they get to exercise power," said a district leader.

Besides, the top leaders of the party are not complying with a provision that says one leader cannot hold more than one post.

This provision was introduced in the last BNP national council held in 2016. Khaleda Zia tried to implement it but could not finish the process as

she landed in jail in a corruption case.

Tarique has also been trying to implement the provision, but has made next to no progress.

"Reorganisation is going on. We are going through a difficult time. We haven't been able to hold meetings in different places and our leaders and activists are accused in many cases. That's why it is taking some time. But it will be done in near future," Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general, told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, BNP Vice Chairman Altaf Hossain Chowdhury is also president of Patuakhali BNP, chairperson's adviser Mashiur Rahman is convener of Jhenidah BNP, Joint Secretary General Mujibur Rahman Sarwar is president of

Barishal BNP, Joint Secretary General Khairul Kabir Khokon is in Narsingdi BNP, Joint Secretary General Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel is president of Dhaka south BNP, Joint Secretary Aslam Chowdhury is president of Chattogram north BNP, and Organising Secretary Nazrul Islam Monju is president of Khulna city BNP.

The BNP has also taken an initiative to reform Krishak Dal, Matsyajibi Dal, and Olama Dal. Convening committees of those organisations were formed but they failed to form any full-fledged committee.

Contacted, Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir blamed the government for obstructing the process of reorganisation.