

Iraq seeks Arab help to push Turkish troops out

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq has urged its Arab allies to help persuade Turkey to withdraw its troops from Iraqi territory, where they have been raiding Kurdish militant positions, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

Its comments come two days after a Turkish drone strike killed two high-ranking Iraqi officers in the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, amid heightened tensions between Ankara and Baghdad.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) said yesterday that one of its commanders had also been killed in the strike, saying the drone had targeted a meeting between its fighters and Iraqi border guards.

On Wednesday the Iraqi foreign ministry, for the third time, summoned Turkey's envoy to Baghdad to protest against the strike, which it denounced as a "flagrant aggression" and a violation of its sovereignty.

Yesterday, Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said he had contacted his Egyptian, Jordanian, Saudi and Kuwaiti counterparts as well as the Arab League to seek their diplomatic support in confronting Ankara.

Hussein said he pleaded for "major Arab efforts to avoid dangerous developments" and for "a united position to force Turkey to pull out its troops who have infiltrated into Iraq", the ministry said.

France yesterday slammed its Nato ally over the strike.

"France deplores this serious development," the foreign ministry said in a statement, adding that "all light must be shed" on what happened.

"France is deeply attached to full respect for Iraqi sovereignty," it added.

Turkey in mid-June launched a cross-border operation against the PKK, blacklisted as a terrorist group by Ankara and its Western allies.

The PKK has waged an insurgency against Ankara since 1984 and has long used the rugged terrain of northern Iraq as a rear base to wage attacks on Turkey.

US to ease water rules after Trump's shower moan

AFP, Washington

The US government is looking at easing regulations on shower fittings following complaints from President Donald Trump who has regularly railed against water conservation rules in his quest for "perfect hair."

On Wednesday the Department of Energy (DOE) said it was proposing to amend the definition of a showerhead to allow multiple showerheads on a single fitting, which would get around water conservation measures brought in under president George H.W. Bush.

The 1992 rules established a maximum water use of 2.5 gallons per minute for showers but the amendment means that will apply to each showerhead rather than a single shower fitting.

The announcement comes after Trump complained about the lack of water pressure in showers.

"Showerheads -- you take a shower, the water doesn't come out," he said in July at the White House announcing a rollback in regulations.

"You want to wash your hands, the water doesn't come out. So what do you do? You just stand there longer or you take a shower longer? Because my hair -- I don't know about you, but it has to be perfect. Perfect."

SI of DMP sued

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in Wari police station in the capital.

After a hearing, the magistrate took cognisance of the case, recorded the statement of the complainant and instructed the concerned deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch of police to investigate the matter and submit a report.

The case documents said, "On October 30 last year, SI Nazmul and the others accused abducted the complainant [Imran] in the capital's Shyampur Eco Park area and forcibly took the keys to his [Imran's] shop, and threatened to frame him in a drug case and an arms case. Later, the accused unlocked the complainant's shop and took away Tk 1 lakh and other essential goods."

The Daily Star failed to reach the SI for comments till the of this filing the report.

3 boys killed

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pronounced them dead.

Legal steps in this connection were underway, ASP Touhidul said.

No one was arrested till filing of this report around 9:00pm.



UK Border Force officials escort migrants intercepted while travelling in RIBs from France to Dover, at the Marina in Dover, southeast England yesterday. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday said illegal migrant crossings of the Channel, which have hit record numbers, were "very bad and stupid and dangerous" on the eve of talks in Paris.

PHOTO: AFP

In US, 'Cancel Rent' movement gains ground

AFP, Los Angeles

Without a job and terrified of being left homeless during the coronavirus pandemic, Manuel Acero had no other option but to enlist in the US Army.

His distraught wife Ady Carrillo stayed behind in the studio apartment they rented in Los Angeles, but the 48-year-old isn't just awaiting his return home -- she's taking action.

Carrillo has joined the "Cancel Rent" movement, which is gathering steam with protests across the United States as Americans hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic pile up debts.

Activists want landlords to suspend rent obligations for those in the most dire straits, having lost their jobs in the economic chaos sparked by the virus crisis.

Like the 31-year-old Acero, who is now at boot camp, many have been forced to resort to extreme measures.

"It's been three months since we were able to make rent -- the only

choice my husband had left was to join the army," Carrillo told AFP, bursting into tears.

"I'm scared they'll send him away from me" on an overseas deployment, she said. "If he dies, I die with him."

With tens of millions of Americans out of work because of the pandemic, federal, state and local authorities temporarily suspended evictions on tenants who cannot make rent.

But many worry about what happens when those concessions run out.

Over the past week, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has resumed evictions ordered before March when the lockdowns began, local media have reported.

In the city's Chinatown neighborhood on Monday, a small group of protesters including Carrillo rallied and marched on City Hall, demanding answers.

"Cancel rent!" "Housing is a human right!" community organizer

Annie Shaw yelled into a megaphone.

"We demand strong measures like canceling rents," Shaw said. "Canceling rent will protect the community."

Los Angeles has the sixth-highest rents in the country, according to a ranking by the real estate site Zumper, trailing behind cities like San Francisco and New York.

"It's been so hard for me to make rent during the pandemic," said Rosa Hernandez, who also attended Monday's rally.

"I am an independent cleaner, and used to make \$700 a week. Now I make only \$100 to \$200 a week. If there is food on the table, there is no extra money for rent."

Demonstrations and "rent strikes" by the "Cancel Rent" movement have been staged in various cities across the country since the start of the virus epidemic, which has so far left more than 164,000 Americans dead.

"We are not going to pay," said

Lydia Nicholson, an organizer of the LA Tenants Union.

"I don't think it's going to be pretty at all for anyone if they make us do something that we just obviously can't do."

Los Angeles prosecutors have said large-scale rent forgiveness is out of the question, and would cost the city more than \$1 billion in compensation to landlords, according to a memo seen by the Los Angeles Times.

Mayor Eric Garcetti's office did not respond to an AFP request for comment for this story.

For their part, landlords say freezing rents would not only affect the upkeep of their properties but would also impact the payment of taxes, which are key to the city budget, as well as mortgages.

Suspending rent payments is "just shifting the debt up the food chain," said Jay Martin, director of a group that represents owners of rent-controlled properties in New York.

Buses, trains disinfected as N Korea ramps up virus measures

AFP, Seoul

Temperature checks, hand sanitisers, and face masks are being enforced across Pyongyang's public transport system as North Korea intensifies its fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

North Korea -- whose crumbling health system would struggle to cope with a major outbreak -- has long insisted it has not had cases of the disease.

But it raised its state of emergency to the maximum level in July, saying it had discovered what it called the country's first suspected virus case -- a former defector returning from the South.

Pyongyang had yet to confirm whether he tested positive, but such a source might be more diplomatically convenient for the North than if the virus arrived from China -- its key ally -- where it first emerged.

Pictures Wednesday showed

passengers -- all with face coverings -- lining up for hand sanitiser before boarding buses in Pyongyang.

At the capital's railway station, visitors in face masks had their temperature checked before being allowed to enter the building.

Inside the waiting area, officials busily sprayed disinfectants as a preventive measure.

"We are stepping up propaganda activities as required by the maximum emergency system," said Jon Gyong

Hui, a chief doctor at the railway station.

"We are especially putting more efforts than ever into disinfecting customers' hands and taking their body temperature."

The nuclear-armed North closed its borders in late January as the virus spread in neighbouring China.

It imposed tough restrictions that put thousands of people into isolation, but analysts say the country is unlikely to have avoided the contagion.

Police move to centralise their drug purchase

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directly from renowned companies, we will be able to save money and ensure quality of medicine," Hasanul Haider, director of Central Police Hospital at Rajarbagh, told this newspaper recently.

Hasanul was involved in the decision-making of centralising medicine procurement.

In a letter issued on July 14, Sharif Mustafizur Rahman, assistant inspector general (in charge of health services) at the PHQ, requested heads of different units to send demands of medicine up to December 31 to the PHQ by July 20.

The unit heads were requested

to submit only generic names of medicine, not any brand or trade names with the demand letter.

Officials at the PHQ said a high-powered committee will be formed to procure the medicines and a pharmacist will be appointed to ensure quality.

At present, different units purchase drugs from different vendors who may supply substandard medicines and even adulterated ones, they said.

The units often cannot check the quality and there is a lack of transparency and accountability.

This newspaper got a picture of irregularities in procurement after

talking to several officials to the rank of sub-inspector and inspector in three districts.

Three officials in one of the districts alleged sometimes they were supplied medicines of non-reputed brands. At other times, they paid for the medicine out of their own pockets.

In another district, two policemen said during the tenure of the previous SP, they used to get medicines of non-reputed brands.

However, things have changed now as the present SP is an officer with a good image, they said.

Meanwhile, the new decision frustrates many unit chiefs.

A number of SPs said the police high-ups are centralising the purchase whereas decentralisation is expected in a democratic country.

"If irregularities are the reasons, then the authority can remove the dishonest SPs or unit chiefs instead of stopping the long-standing practice," an SP told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity.

"For those of us who are honest, such a decision is disgraceful."

Some of them argued that involvement of a handful of people in the drug procurement process will increase the risk of irregularities if any of the officials turns out to be dishonest.

Modi's top cabinet colleagues were stricken with Covid-19, including interior minister Amit Shah.

BIG DROP IN AUSTRALIA

Australia's virus-hit Victoria state reported a major drop in new cases yesterday, but officials warned against complacency amid a "worrying" spread of the disease in regional areas outside Melbourne.

Just 278 new cases and eight deaths were detected in Victoria -- a low not seen in weeks -- while a smaller outbreak in neighbouring New South Wales produced 12 additional cases and one death.

Boy arrested for raping 4-yr-old in Kishoreganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A four-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 13-year-old boy in Jaluapara area of Kishoreganj town on Wednesday afternoon.

The victim, daughter of a local tailor, was admitted to Kishoreganj General Hospital where she is currently undergoing treatment, police said.

Quoting the girl's family members and neighbours, Abu Bakar Siddiq, officer-in-charge of Kishoreganj Sadar Police Station, said the girl was playing with some other children in front of her house in the afternoon.

At one point, the boy allegedly lured the girl with chocolates and took her to an abandoned brickfield nearby and raped her, he said.

When the girl started scrambling, locals rushed to the spot and rescued her, said the OC. But the boy, a labourer at a local brickfield, managed to flee the scene.

The girl was immediately taken to Kishoreganj General Hospital. On information, police visited the hospital at night.

The victim's father lodged a case with the police station at night. Police arrested the boy from the locality hours after the case was.

After interrogation, he was produced before a Netrakona court yesterday.

The court sent him to Gazipur juvenile correction centre.

Jubo League

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Imran Mahmud Tuhin, inspector of Bogura DB police, said they were arrested around 5:00 pm on Wednesday.

Earlier on Wednesday morning, a victim named Amanat Ullah Tareque, 33, of Bogura, filed a fraud case against Shakil.

The victim told The Daily Star, "Since September last year we had paid Tk 14.35 lakh to Shakil for getting a huge loan after seeing an online advertisement of Shakil's 'International Loan Service' page.

"Later, in October and December that year, Shakil sent us two cheque copies worth Tk 4.50 crore of Pubali bank. Later in doubt, we have sent the cheque copy to different bank experts and they told us that the cheques were fake."

Ali Asraf Bhuiyan, superintendent of Bogura police, said they seized fake cheques worth Tk 1201.72 core, fake appointment letters of Bangladesh Army and different government jobs, three computers, three printers, fake ID cards of different print and electronic media, 60 sim cards of different mobile operators, and two terabytes of fake edited documents."

Shakil and his gang members were using 12 Facebook accounts in different names, 35 Facebook pages, 22 online news portals, seven bank accounts in the purposes of cheating various young business entrepreneurs and individuals.

They have been doing this for at least seven years, said police.

Dwarf planet

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the presence of the compound hydrohalite -- a material common in sea ice but which until now had never been observed from Earth.

Maria Cristina De Sanctis, from Rome's Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica said hydrohalite was a clear sign Ceres' used to have sea water.

"We can now say that Ceres is a sort of ocean world, as are some of Saturn's and Jupiter's moons," she told AFP.

The team said the salt deposits looked like they had built up within the last two million years -- the blink of an eye in space time.

This suggests that the brine may still be ascending from the planet's interior, something De Sanctis said could have profound implications in future studies.

"The material found on Ceres is extremely important in terms of astrobiology," she said.

"We know that these minerals are all essential for the emergence of life."

Writing in an accompanying comment article, Julie Castillo-Rogez, from the California Institute of Technology's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, said the discovery of hydrohalite was a "smoking gun" for ongoing water activity.

"That material is unstable on Ceres' surface, and hence must have been emplaced very recently," she said.

In a separate paper, US-based researchers analysed images of the Occator crater and found that its mounds and hills may have formed when water ejected by the impact of a meteor froze on the surface.

The authors said their findings showed that such water freezing processes "extend beyond Earth and Mars, and have been active on Ceres in the geologically recent past".

Work hard

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revive and sign fresh contracts for the projects for which they had committed finance during the Pakistan days. Some of the projects have already been revived for implementation with financing from the original donor countries.

SOURCES: August 15, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.