



Security personnel keep watch as members of the World Health Organization (WHO) team tasked with investigating the origins of the coronavirus disease visit Huanan seafood market in Wuhan, Hubei province, China yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Tunisians protest against 'police state'

AFP, Tunis

Hundreds of young people took to the streets of the Tunisian capital on Saturday to protest against police repression and demand the release of demonstrators detained in recent days.

The protesters marched from Tunis's central Human Rights Square to Habib Bourguiba Avenue, trying to make their way to the interior ministry, an AFP reporter said, but security forces blocked their path.

Denouncing what they say is police repression and government corruption, some demonstrators held signs that read, "Police everywhere, justice nowhere".

Some threw plastic water bottles at security forces, while others chanted

slogans including "Down with police rule" and "Release the nation's sons (from detention)".

Mired in a political and economic crisis worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic, Tunisia has been rocked this month by a wave of social unrest, a decade after Arab Spring protests ousted the autocratic regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Security forces have carried out mass arrests, including of minors, after more than a week of night-time riots and daytime protests against police repression, poverty, corruption and unemployment.

"The security forces are repressing us and want the return of a police state," protester Majdi Sliiti, 33, told AFP on Saturday. "We will not accept this."

Amnesty International on Thursday

called on Tunisian authorities to investigate the death of a young man who died after reportedly being hit by a tear gas canister during protests last week.

Tunisia has often been praised as a rare success story for its democratic transition after its 2011 revolution that sparked similar uprisings in the region.

But many Tunisians are angered at a political class seen as locked in power struggles and disconnected from the suffering of ordinary people, who are facing spiralling prices and steep unemployment.

The International Monetary Fund last week encouraged Tunisia to set up a reform plan to "bring economic imbalances back to a sustainable trajectory".

## 16 more die

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coronavirus cases and 17 fatalities. Bangladesh reported its first Coronavirus cases on March 8 and the first death on March 18.

## Road crash

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The deceased were identified as Selim Mia, 25, son of Tayeb Ali, Rokshana Begum, 30, wife of Rafiqul Islam, Abdul Mannan, 58, son of late Abdul Hye, Lal Mia, 35, son of late Ketu Mia, and the driver of the vehicle Md Jubed Ali, 25, son of Yusuf Ali -- all hailing from different villages of the adjacent Nalitabari upazila.

All of the deceased and injured were passengers of the auto-rickshaw. Selim Mia, Rokshana Begum driver Md Jubed Ali were killed on the spot.

They were taken to Sherpur General Hospital where Lal Mia and Abdul Mannan succumbed to their injuries, said the OC.

Of the injured persons, Mamun was referred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital while eight-year-old Rumi Begum, daughter of Rokshana Begum, is undergoing treatment at Sherpur General Hospital, the OC added.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies. Police seized the truck but its driver and helper had managed to flee, said the OC.

A case was lodged with the police station.

## Confidence

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Regarding the contributions of the Father of the Nation, Hasina said there had been frantic efforts to erase the name of Bangabandhu from Bangladesh history after August 15, 1975.

"Even they tried to erase the name and contribution of Bangabandhu from the Independence and Language Movement," she said.

Hasina said Ziaur Rahman, HM Ershad, and Khaleda Zia destroyed many archives both at Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar.

She said Bangabandhu wanted to build a country that would be free from poverty and hunger.

"But he could not do that. So, it is our responsibility to finish his unfinished task, and we're taking Bangladesh forward in that direction," she said.

## Swedish Covid

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computer or laptop. The bright-red lighthouse, built on a tiny island off Sweden's west coast in 1868, is surrounded by a scattering of squat, red buildings originally built to house the lighthouse keeper's family. It can only be reached by boat or helicopter, depending on the weather.

## Two held

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and raped her Saturday afternoon when the girl was alone, said Binoy Bhushan Roy, officer-in-charge of Kulara Police Station.

Jamir fled before the neighbours rushed in, hearing the girl scream, the OC said.

Her mother filed a case with the police station hours later, he added. The victim was being treated at a hospital.

(Our Narayananj and Moulvibazar correspondents contributed to the report)

## A dozen MPs indulging

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of their departed souls with respect." Siraj said he would not thank President Abdul Hamid because he did not mention late president Ziaur Rahman who is "the proclaimer of the country's independence".

As the treasury bench MPs boomed, Siraj said, "I can't thank the president for not talking about bribery, corruption, terrorism, murder and rape in his speech, and for not giving directions in this regard."

"Money launderers remain invisible. Who are their patrons? They are all government-backed [or are] directly involved with the government. From Basic Bank's Abdul Hai Bachchu to today's Prashant Kumar Haldar, [all] are close to the government."

Mentioning the name of independent MP Mohammad Shahid Islam Paplu, who has been jailed by the Kuwaiti government, Siraj said Paplu not only tarnished the image of parliament but also of the country.

"Thousands of crores of taka are being spent in the name of holding elections. What is the point of spending people's money on such mockeries of election?"

Dictatorship and democracy contradict each other, he said, the government has to choose one

of the two paths. "Let's form a Baksal government by shedding the undeclared Baksal approach and false words about democracy. Otherwise, give the country back to the people. Give back people's human rights and freedom."

About President Abdul Hamid, he said, "He is the guardian of the state. The president in his speech mentioned the success of the prime minister. I would also like to thank the prime minister for her measures to eradicate terrorism and militancy. I would like to thank [her] for women's empowerment. But there is no democracy and good governance in the country. People want to hear the truth from the president."

The deputy speaker, pointing at the BNP MP, said, "What you have said about the president is not true. I will check whether those statements can be expunged [from the parliament proceedings]."

He also advised the BNP MP to act democratically himself if he expected others to behave democratically.

Several other MPs on their thanksgiving motion lambasted the BNP, its chairperson Khaleda Zia, and acting chairman Tarique Rahman for having links to militants when they were in power.

## Temperature drops to 5.5

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incidents are under treatment at the hospital, said Dr MA Hamid, the head of burn and plastic surgery Department at the hospital.

SUFFERINGS

The low-income people, especially day labourers, farm workers and rickshaw-pullers, are finding it hard to earn the bare minimum to feed their families.

In Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, those living in the Brahmaputra, Dudhkumar, Teesta and Dharla river basins are among the worst sufferers.

"I have been waiting for passengers for over three hours. But I do not find any passenger as people are staying indoors due to severe cold and dense fog," said 45-year-old Motaleb Mia, a rickshaw-puller, in Dada Mor area of Kurigram town.

"We burn straws to keep us warm

as we cannot afford winter clothes," said Afia Bawa, 58, a widow, at Char Gokunda village in Lalmonirhat's Teesta basin area.

Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila's Mogholhat Union Parishad chairman Habibur Rahman said, "I have received more than 400 blankets recently from the government. But I need at least 7,000 blankets for the poor in my union."

In Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, many day labourers could not find any work due to adverse weather.

"I have been waiting here for hours to find work. But nobody is hiring...," said Shukanu Barman, 50, who was waiting at an intersection of Thakurgaon town.

[Our correspondents from Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat and Thakurgaon contributed to the story]

## Russian police detain over 3,000 people

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obvious threat of arrest and the protests that his jailing has sparked pose a major challenge for Putin who has dominated the Russian political landscape for over two decades.

In a highly unusual move, police imposed a security lockdown in the heart of the capital yesterday, sealing off streets to pedestrians near the Kremlin, closing metro stations and deploying hundreds of riot police as snow fell.

Yulia, a 40-year-old protester in Moscow, said she had joined the rallies despite having a panic attack the night before because of worrying about repercussions for taking part.

"I understand that I live in a totally lawless state. In a police state, with no independent courts. In a country ruled by corruption. I would like to live differently," she said.

Police have said the protests were illegal as they had not been authorised and would be broken up. Authorities have said demonstrators could spread Covid-19.

At one point a column of protesters marched towards the prison in

northern Moscow where Navalny is being held, chanting "Let him go!"

Police put turnout at the Moscow protest at around 2,000 people. Reuters reporters estimated crowds of several thousand that were smaller than last weekend when police estimated 4,000 people and the opposition put the figure at 50,000, an assertion the authorities dismissed as nowhere near the truth.

Police detained at least 3,062 people nationwide, including 681 in Moscow, according to OVD-Info, a protest monitoring group. The figures were expected to rise.

Yulia Navalnaya, the Kremlin critic's wife, was among those detained.

"If we stay quiet, then they could come for any of us tomorrow," she wrote on Instagram before joining the protests.

The protest is a test of Navalny's support after many of his prominent allies were targeted in a crackdown this week. Several, including his brother Oleg, are under house arrest.

In the far eastern city of Vladivostok, video footage showed protesters chanting "Putin is a thief" as they linked hands and marched in

temperatures of around -13 Celsius (8.6 Fahrenheit). Police detained more than 100 people in the city, OVD-Info said.

In Tomsk, the Siberian city that Navalny visited before suddenly collapsing on a domestic flight last August, demonstrators gathered in front of a concert hall and chanted "Let him go!"

Navalny, 44, is accused of parole violations which he says are trumped up. A court is due to meet next week to consider handing him a jail term of up to three and a half years.

The West has told Moscow to let Navalny go and his allies have appealed to US President Joe Biden to impose sanctions on 35 people who they say are Putin's close allies.

Seeking to galvanise supporters at home, Navalny put out an online video this month that has been viewed over 100 million times, accusing Putin of being the ultimate owner of a sumptuous Black Sea palace. The Kremlin leader has denied this.

On the eve of the protests, Arkady Rotenberg, a businessman and Putin's former judo sparring partner, said he owns the property.

## Form Supreme Judicial Council

FROM PAGE 1

the current EC under Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda.

In the second letter, they cited a media report that some of the EC officials had embezzled at least Tk 11 crore from the training budget.

The report also mentioned about allegations against 18 people, including the CEC, commissioners and top EC officials, that they took at least Tk 3 crore of the Tk 11 crore.

In the letter, the distinguished citizens said the EC was created as a constitutional body so that it can act independently without any bias.

The EC's constitutional duty is to hold a free, fair and acceptable election.

Arranging and giving training to election-related officials is part of the routine duty of election commissioners and EC officials, and for that they get salaries and allowances from the public exchequer, the statement said.

It is an extremely corrupt and heinous deed to share crores of taxpayers' money by creating posts besides the official ones through abuse of power. There have been media reports about the CAG's audit objections regarding this, read the statement.

"In legal terms, taking money twice for the same work is called double dipping. This is unjust, unethical and a serious financial misconduct."

It further mentioned that a smokescreen has been apparently created over constitution of SJC through the Supreme Court in its verdict on the cancellation of 16th amendment to the constitution said: "The decisions of the apex court of the country are final not because they are infallible, but because the decisions are infallible as they are constitutionally final. By the impugned amendment, the removal mechanism of the judges of higher judiciary by the Supreme

Judicial Council has been substituted by the parliamentary removal mechanism.

"Since this amendment in [sic] ultra vires the constitution, the provision prevailing before substitution is restored. The appeal is accordingly dismissed."

The statement also said it is clear through the verdict that the SJC is still valid, and the SC has not stayed its verdict that restored the SJC.

In yesterday's statement, the eminent citizens said the SJC can properly probe the allegations as it can seek evidence, necessary files, record and documents from the EC and other officials.

In their first letter, they said members of the EC under KM Nurul Huda's leadership had indulged in misconduct and irregularities, including that of Tk 2 crore for delivering speeches as "special speakers" at training programmes ahead of the 11th national election and fifth upazila elections.

In response, the CEC on December 24 said the allegations of spending Tk 2 crore on special speakers at training sessions ahead of elections were made on false grounds.

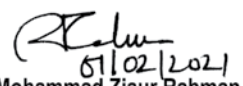
Nurul claimed that the allocation for special speakers for the 11th national election was Tk 1.04 crore and for the fifth upazila election the amount was Tk 47.70 lakh.

According to the rules and regulations, all expenditures were subject to audit and if the audit objections were not settled, all unspent money will be returned to the public exchequer, he mentioned.

"There is no scope for financial irregularities," he said.

The 42 eminent citizens are: Prof Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury of Dhaka University; M Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government; Akbar Ali Khan, former

adviser to a caretaker government; Sultana Kamal, human rights activist; Rasheda K Choudhury, former adviser to a caretaker government; Hameeda Hossain, human rights activist; Ali Imam Majumder, former cabinet secretary; Prof Moinul Islam, economist; Khushi Kabir, human rights activist; Prof Perween Hasan, vice chancellor at the Central Women's University; Badul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shushashonor Jonno Nagorik; Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh; Prof Ahmed Kamal, former DU teacher; Tofail Ahmed, local government expert; ZI Khan Panna, Supreme Court lawyer; Shahdeen Malik, jurist; Shahidul Alam, photographer; Prof Anu Muhammad, economist; Ahsan H Mansur, economist; Abdul Latif Mandal, former bureaucrat; Mubashir Hasan, architect; Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association for Land Reform and Development; Prof CR Abrar, international relations expert; Barrister Sara Hossain, SC lawyer; Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association; Prof Asif Nazrul of DU; Prof Rahnuma Ahmed, writer; Lubna Mariam, artistic director of Shadhona; Prof Akmal Hossain, former DU teacher; Prof Shapan Adnan, researcher; Sharmeen Murshid, chief executive officer of Brotee; Prof Geeti Ara Nasreen of DU; Prof Firdous Azim of Brac University; Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed, former banker; Abu Sayeed Khan, senior journalist; Prof Robayet Ferdous of DU; Prof Shahnaz Huda of DU; Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, SC lawyer; Prof Naila Zaman, director at Clinical Neuroscience Centre, Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation; Zakir Hossain, chief executive of Nagorik Udyog; and Nur Khan Liton, human rights activist.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh				
Department of Agricultural Extension Increasing Cropping Intensity in Greater Mymensingh Region Project Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215				
Memo No. 12.02.0000.120.07(Part-1).2020.77				
Date: 01/02/2021				
Invitation for Tenders				
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).		
2	Agency	Department of Agricultural Extension.		
3	Procuring entity name	Project Director, Increasing Cropping Intensity in Greater Mymensingh Region Project, Department of Agricultural Extension, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215.		
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.		
5	Invitation for	Procurement of Transport Service Sporting Utility Vehicle (SUV)-01 and Multipurpose Vehicle (MPV)-01 (with Car rental, Maintenance and Driver) under the Increasing Cropping Intensity in Greater Mymensingh Region Project.		
6	Invitation Ref. No.	12.02.0000.120.07(Part-1).2020.77		
7	Date	01/02/2021.		
8	Procurement method	OTM.		
9	Budget and source of funds	GoB.		
10	Project code	224321400.		
11	Project name	Increasing Cropping Intensity in Greater Mymensingh Region Project, DAE, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215.		
12	Tender package No.	SD/mymen-1.		
13	Tender package name	(Non-consultant) Procurement of Transport Service with Car rental, Maintenance and Driver.		
14	Tender publication date	01/02/2021.		
15	Tender last selling date	14/02/2021, 5:00pm.		
16	Tender closing date and time	15/02/2021, 12:30pm.		
17	Tender opening date and time	15/02/2021, 1:00pm.		
18	Eligibility of tenderer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenderers shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract under the Applicable Law.</li> <li>Tenderers shall be enrolled in the relevant professional or trade organisations registered in Bangladesh.</li> <li>Tenderers shall have fulfilled its obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh.</li> </ul>		
19	Price of tender document (Tk)	2,000/- (two thousand) Taka only (non-refundable).		
20	Package No.	Identification of package	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)
	SD/mymen-1	Procurement of Transport Service Sporting Utility Vehicle (SUV) Car-01 and Multipurpose Vehicle (MPV) Car-01 (with Car rental, Maintenance and Driver).	Office of the Project Director, Increasing Cropping Intensity in Greater Mymensingh Region Project, 99/1, Power House Road, Kewalkhail, Mymensingh Sadar,	2,70,000/-
				3 months
21	Name of official inviting tender	Mohammad Ziaur Rahman.		
22	Designation of official inviting tender	Project Director.		
23	Address of official inviting tender	Increasing Cropping Intensity in Greater Mymensingh Region Project, Room No. 411, 1st Building (3rd Floor), Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215.		
24	Contact details of official inviting tender	02-55028211.		
25	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings without assigning any reason whatsoever.			
 01/02/2021 <b>Mohammad Ziaur Rahman</b> Project Director E-mail: mymenda@gmail.com				
GD-214				