

Myanmar's ruling junta targets education

Thousands suspended at universities; Suu Kyi to appear in court May 24: lawyer

REUTERS

More than 11,000 academics and other university staff opposed to Myanmar's ruling junta have been suspended after going on strike in protest against military rule, a teachers' group told Reuters.

The suspensions come as the resumption of universities after a year closed due to the coronavirus epidemic prompts a new confrontation between the army and the staff and students who are calling for boycotts over the February 1 coup.

"I feel upset to give up a job that I adored so much, but I feel proud to stand against injustice," said one 37-year-old university rector, who gave her name only as Thandar for fear of reprisals.

"My department summoned me today. I'm not going. We shouldn't follow the orders of the military council."

A professor on a fellowship in the United States said she was told she would have to declare opposition to the strikes or lose her job. Her university authorities had told her every scholar would be tracked down and forced to choose, she told Reuters.

As of yesterday, more than 11,000 academic and other staff had been suspended from colleges and universities

offering degrees, an official of the Myanmar Teachers' Federation told Reuters, declining to be identified for fear of reprisals.

Reuters was not immediately able to ascertain exactly what proportion of total staff that figure represents.

Myanmar had more than 26,000 teachers in universities and other tertiary education institutions in 2018, according to the most recent World Bank data.

Students and teachers were at the forefront of opposition during nearly half a century of military rule and have been prominent in the protests since the army detained elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi and halted a decade of tentative democratic reforms.

Many teachers, like medics and other government workers, have stopped work as part of a civil disobedience movement that has paralysed Myanmar.

As protests flared after the coup, security forces occupied campuses in the biggest city, Yangon, and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, a judge yesterday ordered Suu Kyi to appear in person in court for the first time on May 24, her lawyer said, after weeks of delays in her case.

Suu Kyi has not been publicly seen since she was detained in the February 1 coup.



A patient receives oxygen as she waits outside the passage of a hospital due to a lack of free beds inside the hospital for Covid-19 patients, as the second major coronavirus wave surges in Kathmandu, Nepal yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW CLASHES OUTSIDE AL-AQSA MOSQUE

More than 300 Palestinians hurt

Says Red Cross; US expresses 'serious concerns' about the situation

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Palestinian protesters threw rocks and Israeli police fired stun grenades and rubber bullets in clashes outside al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem yesterday, as Israel marked the anniversary of its capture of parts of the city in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said more than 300 Palestinians were injured in the violence, and at least 205 of them were taken to hospitals. Several of the Palestinians were in critical condition and police said 12 officers were injured.

Al-Aqsa, Islam's third-holiest site, has been a focal point of violence in Jerusalem throughout the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The clashes have raised international concern.

Tensions were particularly high as Israel marked "Jerusalem Day", its annual celebration of the capture of East Jerusalem and the walled Old



Jewish youth walk through the Old City's Damascus Gate and the Muslim Quarter.

Police fired tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets at hundreds of Palestinians who hurled rocks at them on al-Aqsa's stone-strewn plaza, witnesses said.

The violence at the holy compound abated several hours after it began and witnesses said Israeli police had begun allowing Palestinians over the age of 40 to enter. In public remarks, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was determined to uphold law and order in Jerusalem while preserving "freedom of worship and tolerance for all".

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan expressed "serious concerns" about the situation in Jerusalem, including the potential evictions, in a call with his Israeli counterpart on Sunday.

City that is home to Muslim, Jewish and Christian holy places.

In an effort to ease the situation, Israeli police said they had banned Jewish groups from paying Jerusalem Day visits to the holy plaza that houses al-Aqsa, and which Jews revere as the site of biblical Jewish temples.

Police were also considering whether to reroute a traditional Jerusalem Day march in which thousands of Israeli flag-waving

Busy bees in Colombia get respite in bamboo hotels

REUTERS, Barbosa

Solitary bees are enjoying new digs in Barbosa, Colombia, where tiny hotels built by the Aburra Valley Metropolitan Authority provide places to rest and recover after a busy day pollinating.

Lovingly built from wood, with acrylic roofs to protect them from rain, the hexagonal structures are filled with a variety of bamboo canes that allow bees of all shapes and sizes to check in for a well-deserved rest.

"It's like a hotel because here they're going to have a quiet moment in their room ... before setting off again," said Hector Ivan Valencia, an assistant for the local authority's risk management unit.

During the day, assistants like Valencia delicately clean the bamboo rooms using tools such as paint brushes. "If this were a regular hotel, I'd be one of the people cleaning the rooms," Valencia said.

Colombia, the world's second-most biodiverse country, has registered 550 varieties of bees within its borders

according to the environment ministry, although the true number of species could be as high as 1,445.

As elsewhere in the world, Colombia's bees - vital for fertilizing plants - are threatened by human activity, including the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and also by climate change.

The bee hotels were installed to protect species found in the 10 municipalities of the metropolitan area of the Aburra Valley, including Barbosa and Colombia's second city Medellin.

"Globally (bees) are being negatively impacted and they are losing more spaces every day," said Juan David Palacio, director of the metropolitan area's environmental and transportation authority.

Yet while the plight of honey bees generates more of a buzz, solitary bee species do not have anyone in their corner, Valencia added.

"These little bees are supremely sensitive to poisons and since they don't produce honey no one speaks up for them, so we're coming to the rescue," he said.

30 dead after boat capsizes in Nigeria

AFP, Kano

Thirty people drowned when an overloaded boat capsized in central Nigeria's Niger state, an emergency official told AFP yesterday.

The boat, carrying 100 local traders, split in two after smashing into a stump during high winds on its return from a market on Saturday, said Ibrahim Audu Hussein, spokesman for the state's emergency agency.

The accident occurred at Tijana village in Munya district. "So far 30 bodies have been recovered and five are still missing," Hussein said. "Sixty-five passengers were rescued with the help of local divers."

Heavy rains were hampering the search but divers were "braving the odds," Hussein said.

Iran confirms Saudi talks

AFP, Tehran

Iran's foreign ministry yesterday for the first time confirmed the Islamic republic is holding talks with regional rival Saudi Arabia, but said it is "too soon" to discuss the results.

Media reports, later confirmed by diplomatic and Iraqi government sources, revealed that Iranian and Saudi officials met in Baghdad in April, their first high-level meeting since Riyadh cut diplomatic ties with Tehran in 2016.

"The purpose of the talks was both bilateral and regional," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters.

"But let us wait and see the results of these talks ... it might still be too soon to talk about the details of the negotiations," he added, noting that Iran has "always welcomed such talks at any level and in any shape".

The neighbouring countries cut ties in 2016 after Iranian protesters attacked Saudi diplomatic missions following the kingdom's execution of a revered Shia cleric.

Time to take action

Says South Korea's Moon about N Korea ahead of summit with Biden

REUTERS, Seoul

South Korean President Moon Jae-in said yesterday he sees his final year in office as the last chance to achieve a lasting peace with North Korea, and said it was time to take action amid stalled talks over Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programmes.

Moon's comments, in a speech marking the fourth year of his presidency, come ahead of his first summit with U.S. President Joe Biden in Washington on May 21.

The South Korean president is expected to push the United States to seek engagement with North Korea, though Biden has shown little interest in making North Korea a top priority.

"I will consider the remaining one year of my term to be the last opportunity to move from an incomplete peace toward one that is irreversible," Moon said. "Now, the time for long deliberations is also coming to an end. It is time to take action."

Biden's administration says its overtures to Pyongyang have not been answered, and it recently completed a policy review that called for a "practical" approach of using diplomacy to find achievable goals toward eventually persuading North Korea to surrender its nuclear weapons.

Moon said that he welcomed the conclusion of the policy review and that it demonstrated a "view that the current stalemate in dialogue is not desirable."



'Need to put our house in order'

Sonia Gandhi to Congress on Assembly polls results

NDTV ONLINE

Interim Congress chief Sonia Gandhi yesterday demanded that the party "take note of our serious setbacks (and) put our house in order", after yet more disappointing performances in elections.

She said senior leaders from Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Bengal - the states that went to the polls in April-May - would be required to "brief us, very frankly, on our performance..."

"We want them to tell us why we performed well below expectation. These results tell us clearly that we need to put our house in order," Mrs Gandhi said, as she delivered the opening remarks at a meeting of the CWC (Congress Working Committee) - the party's highest decision-making body.

"We have to take note of our serious setbacks. To say we are deeply disappointed is to make an understatement. I intend to set up a small group to look at every aspect that caused such reverses and report back very quickly," she added.

The Congress was also set to discuss elections to choose a new President - a sensitive subject given the divide between senior leaders over the leadership of the party and its continuing poor performances. The proposed date of the election is June 23, with nominations to close by June 7. However, final confirmation of the polling date is pending after some leaders voiced opposition.

Over the past year senior leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Shashi Tharoor and Kapil Sibal have called for "full-time" and "effective leadership" that will be "visible" and "active" in the field.

In August, 23 of them wrote to Mrs Gandhi to express concern over the decline of the party, and said that its revival was essential for the nation and democracy. They called for sweeping reforms, including decentralisation of power, empowerment of state units and organizational elections at every level.

The letter triggered a row that split the Congress down the middle and prompted an explosive seven-hour meeting of the CWC, during which Mrs Gandhi offered to resign before being persuaded by loyalists to remain in temporary charge.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Trump 'egged on' Capitol rioters: FB panel co-chair

Donald Trump encouraged the Capitol rioters and so earned his Facebook ban, but the social media giant's rules are in "shambles" and need fixing, the co-chair of the network's oversight panel said Sunday. The panel agreed just days ago that Facebook was right to oust the ex-president for his comments regarding the deadly January 6 rampage, though it sidestepped an overall decision on whether he will ever be allowed back. "He issued these statements which were just egging on -- with perfunctory asking for peace -- but mostly he was just egging them on to continue," oversight body co-chair Michael McConnell told Fox News Sunday.

11 killed as bomb blows up a bus in Afghanistan

A bomb has blown up a bus in Afghanistan killing at least 11 people and wounding dozens, officials said yesterday, the latest in a series of deadly blasts that has come as foreign forces withdraw. The roadside bomb exploded late on Sunday in the southern province of Zabul, the provincial governor's spokesman, Gul Islam Sial, said. Woman and children were among the wounded, he said. An interior ministry spokesman said 28 people were wounded. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Taliban insurgents did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Escaped Leopard sparks fear in China

A leopard remained at large in eastern China yesterday after escaping from a safari park with two fellow big cats, sparking a frenzy among web-users who have shared pictures and video of the spotted felines roaming tea plantations in the area. Residents of the city of Hangzhou first reported seeing a leopard on the loose on Friday, with the safari park only acknowledging the escapes after the news went viral. The park said it delayed making a public statement to avoid causing panic, but has been attacked online for allowing the animals to escape and endangering residents by not alerting the public in a timely fashion.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh Bangladesh Marine Academy, Rangpur. Pirganj, Rangpur.

Invitation for Tender (Corrigendum Notice)

It is to inform all concerned that the invitation for Tender No-OTM-01/2020-21, invited vides this office dated 29.04.2021 is hereby amended as follows;

Name of work	Notice & SL. No.	Description	Published in tender	Amended
Supply of Boson Store Goods -Lot:1	SL. No. 09	Procurement Nature	-	Goods
Supply of Cookeries, Cutleries and Other Items for Cadet Mess-Lot:2	SL. No. 17	Tender Last Selling Date	18-05-2021 (1200 hours).	23.05.2021 (1200 hours)
Supply of Sports and Misc Items-Lot:3	SL. No. 18	Tender Closing date and time.	19-05-2021 on 12.00 Noon.	24.05.2021 on 12.00 Noon.
Supply of Stationery Items for Cadet and Office-Lot:4	SL. No. 19.	Tender Opening date and time	19-05-2021 on or after 12.30 pm.	24-05-2021 on or after 12.30 Noon.
Supply of Materials for Demonstration Hall (For Practical classes of Cadet) -Lot: 5	SL. No. 27	Tender document price	Taka 2000.00 (Two Thousand) Non-refundable DD/PO in favour of the Commandant, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Rangpur (Drawable from Sonali Bank, Pirganj Branch) Rangpur is to be submitted.	Taka 1000.00 (One Thousand) Per Lot Non-refundable DD/PO in favour of the Commandant, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Rangpur (Drawable from Sonali Bank, Pirganj Branch) Pirganj, Rangpur is to be submitted.

All other terms and conditions of the tender will remain unchanged. This corrigendum notice will be part and parcel of the tender.

Capt. Md Shafiqul Islam Sarker BN
Commandant
Bangladesh Marine Academy, Rangpur.