

NEWS

IN brief

Israel opens first embassy in Gulf

Israel's new foreign minister inaugurated its embassy in the United Arab Emirates yesterday and offered an olive branch to other former adversaries, saying: "We're here to stay." During his two-day visit, the first to the Gulf power by an Israeli cabinet minister since the countries established ties last year, Yair Lapid was also due to inaugurate a consulate in Dubai and sign a bilateral agreement on economic cooperation. "Israel wants peace with its neighbours - with all its neighbours. We aren't going anywhere. The Middle East is our home," Lapid said during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Tigray forces seize Mekelle

Tigrayan forces said they had Ethiopian government troops on the run around the regional capital Mekelle yesterday after taking full control of the city in a sharp reversal of eight months of conflict. Aid agencies would be given full access to Tigray, Getachew Reda, spokesman for the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), told Reuters yesterday. The fighting in Ethiopia's northern region has killed thousands of people, displaced two million and brought hundreds of thousands to the brink of famine.

India probes Twitter over inaccurate Kashmir map

Indian police have filed preliminary charges against senior Twitter officials over an inaccurate map of the country, an official said yesterday, in the latest escalation between the US firm and New Delhi. Uttar Pradesh state police said the criminal case was filed against two Twitter India officials late Monday following a complaint from the local head of a Hindu nationalist group that the US firm's website showed the disputed Kashmir region as an independent country. Twitter has been locked for several months in an acrimonious row with New Delhi over new rules for social media companies operating in India. The regulations require firms to remove and identify the "first originator" of posts deemed to undermine India's sovereignty, state security or public order.



Zuma gets 15-month jail term for contempt of court

In a historic ruling, South Africa's top court yesterday handed the country's former president, Jacob Zuma, a 15-month jail term for "egregious" contempt of court after he refused to appear before graft investigators. Zuma was told to turn himself in within five days, failing which police will be ordered to arrest him and take him to jail. The ruling sets a precedent for South Africa -- and a benchmark for the continent -- by jailing a former head of state for failing to respond to a corruption probe. Zuma, 79, is accused of enabling the plunder of state coffers during his nearly nine-year stay in office, which ended calamitously in February 2018 when the ruling African National Congress (ANC) forced him out.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



People play in mud as they plant rice samplings on the field during National Paddy Day, also called Asar Pandra, that marks the commencement of monsoon season, in Bhaktapur, Nepal, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Stay united' against junta

Suu Kyi urges Myanmar people; judge denies motion to dismiss 'made-up' evidence against her

AGENCIES

Ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi asked the people of Myanmar to stay "united" in the face of military rule, her lawyers said yesterday, as she reappeared in a junta court.

The Nobel laureate, and daughter of independence hero General Aung San, has been under house arrest since a February coup that sparked huge pro-democracy protests the junta has tried to crush with deadly force.

Invisible to the outside world bar a handful of courtroom appearances, Suu Kyi, 76, has been hit with an eclectic raft of charges. She could face more than a decade in prison if convicted on all counts.

She is accused of a series of offences ranging from bribery and violating coronavirus protocols to illegally possessing two-way radios and incitement to commit crimes against the state - allegations her lawyers reject.

Yesterday, she heard testimony that she flouted coronavirus restrictions during elections her National League for Democracy (NLD) party won by a landslide last year, her lawyer Min Min Soe told reporters.

Min Min Soe also told reporters that Suu Kyi had urged people to "Please stay united. Please be united".

The specially-convened court in the capital Naypyidaw also heard testimony on a separate charge of sedition, although Suu Kyi's legal

team argued two documents submitted by the prosecution were inadmissible as they were unsigned.

Her legal team head Khin Maung Zaw told Reuters the prosecution had entered evidence he believed was inadmissible, but the judge allowed it.

The evidence includes letters the prosecution says were issued by Suu Kyi's NLD party in the days after the coup which were widely shared on social media.

One urged embassies not to recognise the junta, among several documents that Khin Maung Zaw said were signed by neither Suu Kyi nor her co-defendants, ousted President Win Myint and former Naypyitaw mayor Myo Aung.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since Suu Kyi's ouster, with huge protests, renewed clashes between the military and ethnic rebel armies in border regions and an economy spiralling into freefall.

Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing has justified his power grab by citing alleged electoral fraud in the November poll won by the NLD.

In an interview with Russian news agency Sputnik published on Monday, Hlaing said Suu Kyi's fate was not in his hands.

The military has cracked down brutally on dissent -- shooting protesters, arresting suspected dissidents in night raids, shutting down news outlets and rounding up journalists.

More than 880 civilians have been killed, according to a local monitoring group.



UN PEACEKEEPING BUDGET IMPASSE

Missions prepare for possible shutdown

AGENCIES

United Nations peacekeeping missions globally are preparing for a possible shutdown tomorrow if the 193-member UN General Assembly is unable to agree a new more than \$6 billion budget for the year to June 30, 2022, officials and diplomats said on Monday.

Some diplomats blamed changes to negotiating procedures, issues with logistics and tough talks pitting China against Western countries for the delay in reaching an agreement.

The budget for the UN's global peacekeeping operations -- about 20 missions worldwide, with nearly 100,000 Blue Helmets mobilized -- amounts to about \$6.5 billion and covers a 12-month period starting each year on July 1, which is Thursday.

Catherine Pollard, the UN head of management strategy, policy and compliance, said the world body's peacekeeping missions - most of which are in Africa and the Middle East - had been advised to start putting contingency plans in place in case a new budget is not adopted in time.

"At the same time, we remain hopeful and confident that member states will conclude their negotiations," Pollard told reporters.

She said that if the June 30 deadline is missed then Secretary-General Antonio Guterres can only spend money to safeguard UN assets and ensure the protection of the staff and the peacekeepers.

UN peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix said missions would be severely limited and unable to carry out such measures as protecting civilians, helping tackle Covid-19 and supporting political efforts and mediation.

The United States is largest assessed contributor to the peacekeeping budget, responsible for about 28%, followed by China with 15.2% and Japan with 8.5%.

Quotes of the day



My commitment to Israel is ... ironclad. What I can say to you is that Iran will never get a nuclear weapon on my watch.

US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN TO ISRAELI COUNTERPART



To bring the pandemic to an end, we must get more vaccines to more places.

US SECRETARY OF STATE ANTHONY BLINKEN AT G20



Multi-lateralism is not a high-sounding slogan, and it cannot become gift-wrapping for the implementation of unilateral action.

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI AT G20



JUNE 30

1960 - The Republic of Congo achieved independence from Belgium.

1997 - Britain handed Hong Kong back to China at the stroke of midnight.

2002 - Brazil's national soccer team wins World Cup in Germany.

SOURCE: REUTERS



Greece recovers Picasso years after gallery heist

AFP, ATHENS

Greece yesterday said it had recovered a Picasso painting personally donated by the Spanish master to the Greek people, almost a decade after it was stolen alongside two other artworks in an audacious heist at the National Gallery.

'Head of a Woman', gifted by Pablo Picasso to Greece in 1949, was recovered in Keratea, a rural area some 45 kilometres (28 miles) southeast of Athens, officials told a news conference.

"Today is a special day, (a day of) great joy and emotion," Culture Minister Lina Mendoni told reporters.

Mendonni said the painting would have been "impossible" to sell as it had a personal inscription by Picasso on the back -- "For the Greek people, a tribute by Picasso."

The artist had given the cubist painting to the Greek state in recognition of the country's resistance to Nazi Germany during a painful 1941-44 occupation.

"This painting is of particular importance and sentimental value to the Greek people, as it was personally dedicated by the great painter to the Greek people for their fight against fascist and Nazi forces," she said.

Another painting stolen in the same heist in January 2012, 'Stammer Windmill' by Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, was also found.

The 2012 heist at the National Gallery, Greece's largest state art collection, lasted just seven minutes.

A sketch by 16th-century Italian artist Guglielmo Caccia, better known as Moncalvo, was also stolen in the same robbery. But state television reported it was damaged in the heist and discarded.

The theft, at the height of the Greek debt crisis, was followed a few months later by another high-profile robbery of nearly 80 archaeological artefacts from a museum in Olympia dedicated to the ancient Olympic Games.

The items were recovered several months later.



COVID-19 VACCINE SCAM

Brazil senators file case against Jair Bolsonaro

AFP, BRASILIA

Three Brazilian senators formally accused President Jair Bolsonaro of malfeasance before the Supreme Court Monday over allegations he failed to have a top ally investigated for suspicions of massive corruption in the purchase of Covid-19 vaccines.

The criminal complaint comes after a Senate commission investigating the administration's pandemic response uncovered explosive accusations last week that Bolsonaro knew about suspected corruption in Brazil's \$300 million deal for Indian-made vaccine Covaxin and failed to intervene.

A criminal case against Bolsonaro before the Supreme Court could see him removed from office -- though Prosecutor General Augusto Aras, an ally, would have to bring charges.

The allegations emerged when a Singapore-based firm now suspected of being a shell company billed the Brazilian health ministry \$45 million for yet-to-be-delivered doses of Covaxin.

That raised red flags for a health ministry official named Luis Ricardo Miranda. He refused to sign off on the advance payment. Miranda told the Senate inquiry his superiors at the ministry exerted "atypical, excessive" pressure on him to approve the transaction.

According to reports, the vaccine's manufacturer, Bharat Biotech, initially quoted a price of \$1.34 a dose. But Brazil agreed to pay \$15 a dose, more than for any other vaccine it purchased.

বাংলাদেশ উন্নয়ন গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠান

BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

No. 20.08.0000.200.45.001.21. 250

Date: 29 June 2021

VACANCY RE-ADVERTISEMENT

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) under the Ministry of Planning is inviting applications from bonafide Bangladeshi nationals for the post of **Senior Research Fellow and Research Fellow**.

Name of the Post and Scale of Pay (NPS 2015)	Minimum Qualifications
Senior Research Fellow (SRF) Grade-4; Tk. 50000-71200/- with admissible allowances.	The candidate should have a Ph.D. degree, eight years of teaching/research experience excluding the period spent in Ph.D. program and five journal publications (of BDS standard)*.
Research Fellow (RF) Grade-6; Tk. 35500-67010/- with admissible allowances.	The candidate should have a Ph.D. degree, two years of teaching/research experience excluding the period spent in Ph.D. program and two journal publications (of BDS standard)*.

* BDS means *Bangladesh Development Studies*, which is a quarterly journal published by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

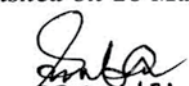
The candidates for SRF and RF are expected to have a background in economics, development studies, sociology, anthropology, population studies or a related field. The candidates having experience in Demography, Population, Trade and Macro (monetary and fiscal) will be given preference. *PhD requirement can be relaxed for otherwise excellent candidates* for the post of SRF and RF. Candidates with single-authored or lead-authored publications (of BDS standard) will be given preference.

Application forms can be downloaded from the website of the Institute (www.bids.org.bd). Completed application forms may be submitted electronically to srf@bids.org.bd / rf@bids.org.bd for the posts of SRF and RF respectively by 31 July 2021. Applicants are not required to send publications or certificates electronically or by post at this stage. An electronically generated acknowledgement receipt of the application will be sent to the applicant. If the applicant does not receive it in two days, it may be sent directly by post to the **Secretary, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, E-17, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207**.

Candidates already in service should apply through proper channel.

The authority reserves the right to reject any or all applications without assigning any reason. BIDS is an equal opportunity employer. Women and those from ethnic minority groups are particularly encouraged to apply.

Please note that those who applied in response to the advertisement published on 28 May 2021, do not need to apply again.


(Subash Chandra Saha)
Secretary (a.i)
BIDS, Dhaka

GD- 1289