

EXECUTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

# Myanmar defiant as condemnation grows

Asean slams junta’s ‘gross lack of will’ towards peace

**REUTERS**  
Myanmar’s ruling military yesterday defended its execution of four democracy activists as “justice for the people”, brushing off a deluge of international condemnation including from its closest neighbours.  
The military, which seized power in a coup last year, announced on Monday it had executed the activists for aiding “terror acts” by a civilian resistance movement, Myanmar’s first executions in decades.  
Junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun said the men were given due process and insisted those executed were not democracy activists, but killers deserving of their punishment.  
“This was justice for the people. These criminals were given the chance to defend themselves,” he told a regular televised news briefing.  
News of the executions triggered international outrage, with the United States, Britain, Australia, the European Union and United Nations leading a chorus of condemnation accusing the



junta of cruelty. Read full story  
Myanmar’s neighbours issued a rare, stinging rebuke of the military yesterday, calling the executions “highly reprehensible” and destructive to regional efforts to de-escalate the crisis.  
The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in a statement from chair Cambodia said it was “extremely troubled and deeply saddened by the executions”, as well as by their timing.  
“The implementation of the death sentences just a week before the 55th Asean ministerial meeting is highly reprehensible,” it said, adding it showed the junta’s “gross lack of will” to support Asean’s UN-backed peace plan.  
The executed men were among more than 100 people whom activists say have been sentenced to death in secretive trials by military-run courts since the coup.  
Malaysia’s Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah said on Tuesday that his country viewed the executions as a crime against humanity.



Smoldering trunks that were once a living forest are all that remain after the destructive Oak Fire near Mariposa, California, USA, on Monday. The Oak Fire in central California comes as parts of the United States remain in the grip of a sweltering heat wave. PHOTO: AFP

## Russia to quit International Space Station ‘after 2024’

**AFP, Moscow**  
Russia has decided to quit the International Space Station “after 2024”, the newly-appointed chief of Moscow’s space agency told President Vladimir Putin yesterday.  
Until now space exploration was one of the few areas where cooperation between Russia and the United States and its allies had not been wrecked by tensions over Ukraine and elsewhere.  
“Of course, we will fulfil all our obligations to our partners, but the decision to leave this station after 2024 has been made,” Yuri Borisov, who was appointed Roscosmos chief in mid-July, told Putin.  
“I think that by this time we will start putting together a Russian orbital station,” Borisov added, calling it the space programme’s main “priority”.  
“Good,” Putin replied in comments released by the Kremlin.

TORY LEADERSHIP RACE IN UK

## Rivals spar over tax, China in first TV debate

**AFP, London**  
Britain’s two prime ministerial contenders have clashed fiercely over tax, China and character in their first head-to-head televised debate, as Rishi Sunak seeks to peg back the frontrunner Liz Truss.  
The primetime debate kicked off a crucial 12-day period featuring three such live TV duels and four husting events in front of Conservative party members who will decide the contest and begin receiving their postal votes next week.  
The weeks-old Tory leadership contest to replace outgoing prime minister Boris Johnson has turned increasingly bitter, with both camps fiercely briefing against each other.  
Monday’s BBC debate showcased that acrimony, with former finance minister Sunak savaging Foreign Secretary Truss’ plans to slash taxes immediately – a key dividing line between the pair.  
“I don’t think that’s right, I don’t think it’s responsible and it’s certainly not Conservative,” he interjected as she detailed her proposals.



“If we follow Rishi’s plans, we are headed for a recession,” Truss replied, accusing him of raising taxes “to the highest rate for 70 years”.  
A snap poll showed Conservative voters thought Truss edged Monday’s debate, by 47 to 38 percent.  
Opinion polls put Truss well ahead among the Tories’ roughly 200,000 members, after she and Sunak emerged as the run-off candidates in a series of votes by Tory MPs.  
The winner will be announced on September 5.

Over the weekend, Sunak announced plans to crack down on China’s influence, calling it the “number-one threat” to domestic and global security. He vowed to “face down China” if elected, including by shuttering Beijing-funded Confucius Institutes in the UK.  
That followed Truss accusing him of being soft on UK adversaries when he was finance minister.  
“I’m delighted that you’ve come around to my way of thinking,” she told Sunak as the issue featured at the debate.  
Beijing took notice of the debate and yesterday urged candidates vying to be Britain’s next prime minister to refrain from “hyping up the so-called ‘China threat’”.  
“I want to make it clear to certain British politicians that making irresponsible remarks about China, including hyping up the so-called ‘China threat,’ cannot solve one’s own problems,” Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said Monday, when asked in a regular news briefing about comments made by Sunak.

## CHURCH SCHOOL ABUSES

# Pope ‘begs forgiveness’ in Canada

**REUTERS, Maskwacis**  
Pope Francis apologized on Monday to Canada’s native people on their land for the Church’s role in schools where indigenous children were abused, calling their forced cultural assimilation a “deplorable evil” and “disastrous error.”  
“With shame and unambiguously, I humbly beg forgiveness for the evil committed by so many Christians against the indigenous peoples,” said Francis.  
The address to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people was the first apology on Canadian soil by the pope as a part of tour to heal deep wounds that rose to the fore after the discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools last year.  
Between 1881 and 1996 more than 150,000 indigenous children were separated from their families and brought to residential schools. Many children were starved, beaten for speaking their native languages, and sexually abused in a system that Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission called “cultural genocide.” Most of the schools were run for the government by Roman Catholic religious orders of priests and nuns.

## 5 BCL men

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Haque Rubel.  
Meanwhile, National University has expelled Masud Rana and Nur Hossain Shawon from Hathazari College over the incident, reports UNB.  
The decision was taken at a syndicate meeting held on Monday night, chaired by Prof Dr Md Mashiur Rahman, vice-chancellor of the university.  
“The expulsion is temporary. The students have been asked to show cause, within 10 days, why it should not be made permanent,” said Md Ataur Rahman, director of the university’s public relations office.  
The meeting also decided to form a committee to probe the incident.  
Hathazari Government College is affiliated with National University.  
On July 17, the female student was physically assaulted by five youths while she was going to Botanical Garden from Pritilata Hall on the CU campus with her friend.

## Two sued

**FROM PAGE 2**  
“My daughter was a very talented girl. She could not take their [Shishir and Tamal’s] various forms of mental torture. They even used to call her over phone to pressurise her... I want justice.”  
Saidur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the station, said Shishir and Tamal have been absconding since the incident. “However, we are conducting drives to arrest them.”  
**No fertiliser**  
**FROM PAGE 12**  
the country’s largest urea fertiliser producer, Jamuna Fertiliser Company Ltd, suspended production this month due to shortage of gas.  
Natural gas is used as a raw material to produce ammonia, a source of nitrogen essential for plants. Then, ammonia is processed and combined with other nutrients, including phosphorus and potassium which are essential for plants’ growth, to produce different types of fertilisers.

## A crucial question

**FROM PAGE 12**  
routine work when the they were supposed to hold a hearing on the petition.  
“I will take an initiative for holding a hearing on the rule after the next annual vacation of the High Court of September as I am now busy with other urgent cases,” he told this newspaper yesterday.  
Attorney General AM Amin Uddin recently told The Daily Star that he could not make any comment on the issue as he was not aware of the writ petition and the related HC rule.  
A senior government official, who had performed duties as an executive magistrate, told this correspondent that executive magistrates were given the powers in order to take preventive actions before offences take place.  
The trial of a case starts after a judicial magistrate takes cognisance

of an offence, he said, adding that the previous functions in a case are carried out by executive officials from the BCS administration cadre.  
Criminal law expert advocate Khurshid Alam Khan said the authority and jurisdiction of the executive magistrates over performing judicial functions as per the relevant provisions of the CrPC are under challenge in the HC after it issued the rule.  
Providing powers to the executive magistrates to run judicial functions is not lawful under the constitution and also as per the apex court verdict in the judiciary separation case, he said, adding that the HC will finally determine whether the empowerment of executive magistrates to perform judicial functions is lawful.  
“The state should take an initiative for quick disposal of the High Court rule,” he observed.

## Pakistan raises power prices amid energy crisis despite rampant inflation

**REUTERS, Karachi**  
Pakistan yesterday raised electricity prices to match rising generation costs amid a global energy crisis and a heatwave, even as the country grapples with its highest inflation in over a decade, the power minister said.  
Inflation last month reached 21.3%, driven mainly by rising food costs, and the country also faces fast-depleting foreign reserves, a depreciating currency and widening current account deficit.  
“Cabinet has approved an increase in electricity tariffs but lifeline (poor) consumers will not be affected,” Power Minister Khurram Dastagir Khan told reporters in Islamabad, adding that the increase would not

apply to them.  
Pakistan’s monthly fuel oil imports are set to hit a four-year high in June, Refinitiv data shows, as the country struggles to buy liquefied natural gas for power generation amid a heatwave that is driving demand. Read full story  
Higher energy imports have hit the economy as the country struggles to boost foreign exchange. The rupee has lost 20% of its value in 2022. Read full story Reserves have fallen to as low as \$9.3 billion, hardly enough to pay for 45 days of imports.  
Pakistan this month reached a staff-level agreement with the IMF for \$1.17 billion in critical funding under a resumed bailout package. Read full story

## Supercharged

**FROM PAGE 12**  
both consumers and regulators in recent years.  
Pushback has begun to soften, however, amid growing food insecurity that could see millions of people face shortages and even famine this year.  
A recent assessment by Intergovernmental Authority on Development found that more than 50 million people across East Africa will be impacted by the region’s food crisis, while three million people face “emergency and catastrophic levels of hunger, risking death”.

## 1.93cr shots

**FROM PAGE 12**  
The vaccination campaign for children aged between five and 11 will begin in August.  
“For this, the registration process has started. At least 4.20 crore children will get vaccines,” he added.  
Meanwhile, the health directorate yesterday reported 621 Covid-19 cases and four more deaths caused by the viral infection.  
The positivity rate was 6.14 percent. With the latest count, Covid-19 claimed 29,275 lives in the country so far.

## Bangladesh

**FROM PAGE 12**  
October, and comprise 10 teams playing 23 matches.  
The sub continent as a whole will enjoy more events. A year later, the action will move to India for the ICC Women’s Cricket World Cup 2025, which will feature eight teams.  
Sri Lanka will host the inaugural edition of the T20 Women’s ICC Champions Trophy – if they secure qualification – in February, 2026.  
In June of the same year, England will host the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup. It will be the nation’s first time hosting the event and the number of teams will also increase from 10 to 12.

## Three held over killing

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Around 7:45 on Monday, the body of third-year student Bulbul Ahmed was found with stab wounds near Gazi Kalur Tila on the campus.  
He had gone there earlier with a friend.  
Bulbul was first taken to the university’s medical centre, which referred him to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. On-duty doctors declared him dead.  
SUST registrar Mohd Ishfaqul Hussain filed a murder case with Jalalabad Police Station accusing several unnamed people.  
Speaking to The Daily Star, several students who were at Gazi Kalur Tila and adjacent areas said they heard a scream around 7:30pm.  
They rushed to the spot and found Bulbul with stab wounds. His friend was there, they said.  
The acquaintance was also admitted to a local private hospital due to trauma.  
Upon interrogation, the friend said they saw the killer but was unable to go into details. Law enforcers then decided to continue the quizzing later, the source added.  
However, the person later left the hospital around 4:00pm yesterday

without informing anyone.  
Two hours later, the friend was traced inside the campus and the university’s proctorial body took them into custody.  
Police said they will continue interrogating the friend soon as they are the prime witness.  
**PROTESTS RAGE ON**  
Students protesting the murder yesterday organised a human chain in front of the campus’s central library of the campus around 11:00am.  
They later brought out a procession on the campus with a four-point demand, including the arrest of the killers within 24 hours and ensuring their maximum punishment.  
Other demands include providing compensation to the victim family, ensuring maximum security inside the campus and renaming the area where Bulbul was killed to “Bulbul Chatter”.  
Contacted, SUST proctor Ishrat Ibne Ismail said, “We are cooperating law enforcers to find the killers. Other logical demands of the students will be met in phases.”  
Meanwhile, SUST authorities have formed a five-member probe body in this regard.

## Tunisia president hails vote set to bolster rule

**AFP, Tunis**  
President Kais Saied said yesterday that Tunisia was moving “from despair to hope” after a referendum almost certain to approve a new constitution that concentrates nearly all powers in his office.  
But his rivals accused the Saied-controlled ISIE electoral board of “fraud” and said his referendum – which was marked by a turnout of little more than a quarter of the 9.3 million electorate – had “failed”.  
Monday’s vote came a year to the day after Saied sacked the government

and suspended parliament in a dramatic blow to the only democracy to have emerged from the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.  
For some Tunisians, his moves sparked fears of a return to autocracy, but they were welcomed by others, fed up with high inflation and unemployment, political corruption and a system they felt had brought few improvements.  
There had been little doubt the “Yes” campaign would win, and an exit poll suggested that votes cast were overwhelmingly in favour.