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Biden 'enemy of the state': Trump

AFP, Wilkes Barre



Donald Trump branded Joe Biden an "enemy of the state" Saturday as he hit back at the US president's assertion that the Republican and his supporters are undermining American democracy, and slammed last month's FBI raid of his Florida home.

Making his first public appearance since the August 8 raid, Trump told a rally in Pennsylvania that the search was a "travesty of justice" and warned it would produce "a backlash the likes of which nobody has ever seen."

"There can be no more vivid example of the very real threats from American freedom than just a few weeks ago, you saw, when we witnessed one of the most shocking abuses of power by any administration in American history," Trump claimed, despite long-standing protocols by which the Justice Department and the FBI act independently of the White House.

Trump told cheering supporters at the "Save America" gathering in the city of Wilkes Barre that the "egregious abuse of the law" was going to produce "a backlash the likes of which nobody has ever seen."

He also hit back at Biden's speech this week in which the president said his predecessor and Republican supporters "represent an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our republic."

Trump slammed it as the "most vicious, hateful and divisive speech ever delivered by an American president." "He's an enemy of the state. You want to know the truth. The enemy of the state is him," Trump said.

HATRED, ANGER on the rise in India

Rahul slams BJP at Congress rally

NDTV ONLINE



There is growing hatred since the BJP government came to power in India, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi said yesterday from the stage at the Congress's mega rally against price rise at the Ramlila ground in Delhi. He said people are afraid -- about their future, inflation, and unemployment -- and that's turning them towards hate. "BJP and RSS are dividing the country," he added.

The rally by the grand old party witnessed huge crowds amid tight security arrangements. Several senior party leaders addressed the audience before Rahul Gandhi stepped in with his no holds barred attacks against the PM and ruling BJP.

Taking aim at Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress MP said "only two businessmen" are enjoying benefits from the government. "Be it airport, port, roads...everything is being taken over by these two people," he

said, referring to PM Modi's rumoured friendship with two top industrialists.

"Ever since the BJP government came to power at the Centre, hatred and anger has been increasing in the country. There is pressure on institutions such as media, judiciary, Election Commission, and the government is attacking all of them," Gandhi said at the rally.

He further claimed the country has never seen such kind of price rise. "Common people are in great difficulty. Opposition is not allowed to raise these issues in parliament, be it tensions with China, inflation, or unemployment," he added.

"Narendra Modi is taking the country backwards, he is spreading hatred. Pakistan and China are benefitting from this. PM Modi has weakened India in the last eight years," he said.

The rally sets the stage for Rahul Gandhi to hit the street with the party's 3,500-km 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' (Unite India Rally) from Kanyakumari to Kashmir starting September 7.

Iran says it has defence system against biological threats

AFP, Tehran

Iranian authorities have introduced defence systems in 51 cities to counter "biological, radiological and chemical threats", deputy defence minister Mehdi Farahi has announced.

The defence ministry has "provided 51 cities in the country with the necessary installations and equipment for passive defence", Farahi was cited as saying on Saturday by Iribnews, the state broadcaster's website.

He added that the ministry is "now able to identify the threats thanks to the infrastructure put in place to confront all sorts of biological, radiological and chemical threats".

The announcement comes as Iran is engaged in negotiations to revive its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

China's No. 3 leader to visit Russia

AFP, Beijing

China's top legislator Li Zhanshu will visit Russia next week, state media reported yesterday, becoming the highest-ranking Communist Party politician to travel to the country since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Li, who ranks third in the Chinese government hierarchy, will pay official visits to Russia, Mongolia, Nepal and South Korea from Wednesday until September 17, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

Obama wins Emmy

AFP, Washington



Hollywood newcomer Barack Obama was awarded an Emmy for narrating his Netflix documentary series "Our Great National Parks," the Television Academy announced Saturday. The former two-term US president had already won a pair of Grammy Awards -- for audio versions of his memoirs "The Audacity of Hope" and "Dreams from My Father" -- so he now only needs an Oscar and a Tony to complete the estimable EGOT. According to an Entertainment Weekly tracker, only 17 people have achieved an EGOT, including Mel Brooks, Whoopi Goldberg, Audrey Hepburn and -- most recently -- Jennifer Hudson. One other president had already been awarded an Emmy -- Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956 -- although his was an honorary award.

Lost Nile branch

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tonnes (that's 16 times more than the Empire State Building), it's the largest of the group of pyramids at Giza. The other two main pyramids belong to Khufu's son Khafre and grandson Menkaure.

Built on the Giza plateau bordering Cairo, the structures -- surrounded by temples, cemeteries and workers' quarters -- are the oldest of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Scientists have long theorized that ancient Egyptians must have exploited former parts of the Nile to move the tonnes of limestone and granite required to build the giant structures. (The Nile's current waterways have moved too far away

from the pyramid sites to be of use.)

This explanation, known as the "fluvial-port-complex" hypothesis, posits that ancient Egyptian engineers cut a small canal across from the site of the pyramid to the Nile's Khufu branch, along the river's western edge of the river's flood plain, and dredged basins down to the river's bottom. The annual flood waters functioned like a hydraulic lift, allowing them to move massive blocks of stone to the construction site, the researchers said.

But until now, scientists have lacked a specific understanding of which landscapes were involved, according to the researchers.

Dhaka summons

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Bangladesh between BP 40 and 41.

During the meeting with Director General (Myanmar Wing), the ambassador was also told that such activities are of "grave threat" to the safety and security of the peace-loving people, violation of border agreement between Bangladesh and Myanmar and contrary to the good neighborly relationship.

The ambassador was also urged to ensure that no trespassing of the internally displaced Myanmar residents takes place from Rakhine.

It was also stressed that a safe, secure and conducive environment in the place of their origin in Rakhine is essential for sustainable and voluntary repatriation of the displaced Rohingyas from Bangladesh, according to the MoFA.

The ambassador assured that he will convey the Bangladesh government's strong position on these incidents to his headquarters.

Earlier mortar shells were found inside Bangladesh launched using Myanmar territory.

The MoFA summoned the Myanmar ambassador on August 21 and August 28 and protest notes were handed over to him conveying Bangladesh's grave concerns.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Yangon also raised the issue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar with much importance.

On Thursday, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam said Bangladesh is better prepared so that none can enter from Myanmar now due to the deteriorated situation in Rakhine state.

The Myanmar side was warned twice in August following mortar shells landing in Bangladesh territory from that country and strong protest was lodged in this regard.

Bangladesh is hosting 1.2 million Rohingyas who in 2017 fled their homes in Rakhine state to escape Myanmar military's campaign of mass killings, rape and arson.

Audit questions

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Meanwhile, the Parliament Secretariat in a press release said PAC recommended taking appropriate action subject to an investigation by the ACC regarding the losses due to the supply of unusable and low quantity KN95 masks.

PAC also recommended forming a committee, comprising additional secretary of the health ministry, the director general of DGHS and the CAG director, to investigate procurement of personal protective equipment, masks and gloves.

Court bins

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Earlier, another case was filed against 5,000 BNP men with the Narayanganj Sadar Model Police Station on Thursday, accusing them of murdering Shaon.

While the records claim Shaon's brother Milon Prodhan was the plaintiff, he denied any association with this case.

Following this, the police filed a case against 71 named and 5,000 unnamed BNP men on Friday on charges of attacking policemen and vandalism.

A Narayanganj court yesterday placed 10 BNP men, who were arrested in this case, on a day's remand each.

Meanwhile in Kishoreganj police yesterday filed a case against 1,500 BNP men over a clash with Awami League activists and police in Pakundia on Saturday. The clash left 100 injured.

(Our correspondents in Narayanganj and Mymensingh contributed to this report.)

Mother sues cops for trying to murder son

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court ordered the CMP commissioner to investigate the incident by an officer not below the rank of assistant superintendent of police (ASP), said court sources.

According to the case statement, Senowara alleged that his son is a victim of police wrath due to his political identity and his strong voice against crime and drugs in Baizid Bostami's Burma Colony area.

The mother alleged that police informant Akash phoned her son on the night of June 16 last year requesting to meet him. After repeated requests, Saiful agreed and went to Hotel Zaman under Baizid Bostami Police Station to meet Akash.

According to the case statement, when Saiful entered the hotel, a team of

police led by former OC Kamruzzaman detained him and snatched his mobile phone and motorcycle keys. Later, police forcibly put Saiful into a car and took him to the Foujdarhat Baizid Link Road at night.

SI Meher Asim Das, as per instruction of the OC, demanded Tk 5 lakh from Saiful and said they would kill him in crossfire if he did not pay. After Saiful declined to pay the money and asked to be taken to the police station, SIs Meher Asim, Saiful and Nazibul Islam Tanvir forcibly got him out of the car and pushed him to the ground.

The OC then fired two shots from his pistol into the victim's left leg and fired several shots in the air, the case statement said. In pain and losing blood, Saiful lost consciousness.

The case statement also mentioned

that the following day, Saiful was taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital, from where he was taken to National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor) in Dhaka, where doctors amputated his leg.

Speaking to this correspondent yesterday, ex-OC Kamruzzaman -- now attached to Nilphamari police -- denied the allegations. He said Saiful stood accused in 18 cases and was hit by a bullet during a gunfight with police on Baizid Link Road.

On June 17, 2021, Baizid Bostami police had said Saiful was hit by a bullet during a gunfight with police near the Asian University for Women campus, adding that three police were also injured and a homemade gun was recovered from his possession.

Planning Commission

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ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of the division, unveiled the findings of the seven-member probe committee at a press conference at the Secretariat yesterday.

A government agency doesn't usually make public such probe reports.

The secretary said the committee was tasked with only finding those responsible for the incident. Since it was not entitled to recommend any punitive action, the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), the implementing authority of the project, will take action in line with the probe body's findings.

Five people, including two children, were crushed to death on August 15 when a crane toppled over, making a box girder segment fall on their car on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in capital's Uttara area.

SAFETY NOT ENSURED

The project was taken up in November 2012 to build a 20.50km dedicated road for buses from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Gazipur.

It was supposed to be completed at a cost of Tk 2,037.85 crore by December 2016. But the deadline was extended several times, and the cost finally stood at Tk 4,268.38 crore.

According to the latest deadline, the project is supposed to be completed by December this year.

The project authorities, however, recently sought a third revision of the project to extend the deadline till December 2023 and also made some changes in the internal allocation for the project without raising the total cost.

In response to the proposal, the Planning Commission sent a letter along with some observations to the project authorities. It will hold a meeting September 8 to discuss the issue.

In its observation, the commission said, "A proposal has been placed to extend the deadline till December 2023, meaning the four-year project will take 11 years."

It asked the authorities concerned to give reasons behind the delay.

According to the commission's document, Tk 5.57 crore has been allocated for "maintenance and protection of traffic" under the component, "general and site facilities".

But a tragic incident took place recently as proper safety measures were not in place at the project site, it read.

"In this situation, the [September 8] meeting should discuss the allocation and the spending. Besides, it has to be clarified at the meeting why safety could not be ensured even after the money was spent for this

purpose," it added.

Contacted, Project Director ASM Elias Shah said they were preparing replies to the questions asked by the Planning Commission and will place those at the meeting.

He, however, didn't give details.

CLEAN CHIT

A day after the girder incident, the probe committee submitted its preliminary report accusing the Chinese contractor -- China Gezhouba Group Co Ltd -- its safety team and the crane operator of negligence.

Referring to the final report, the road secretary yesterday said the committee found 12 reasons behind the incident -- the first one is that the contractor carried out project work on the National Mourning Day, a public holiday, without any approval.

Amin Ullah further said this was the first time a segment of a girder was being transported in the daytime but the reason behind it is not clear.

He said the crane had no licence; it also had no digital monitor and was being operated by a helper of the operator. The contractor had no traffic management plan or emergency management plan, he added.

The people working under the contractor at that particular time didn't have any approval. Besides, the assigned safety engineer didn't have the capacity to do the work, he added.

The contractor is mainly responsible for the incident that took place due to a breach in safety mechanisms, he said adding that "They [the contractor] might have done this to save money."

He further said the consulting firm -- Engineering, Procurement and Construction Management (EPCM) -- sent to the contractor 34 letters regarding safety lapses since January 11 this year.

The consulting firm should have visited the project site regularly and monitored the work properly as dispatch of letters is not enough for ensuring safety compliance, he said.

In reply to a query, he said the project authorities are not responsible for the particular incident but they have to beef up round-the-clock monitoring to ensure safety at the project site.

The secretary said the committee made 14 recommendations to stop recurrence of the such incidents. One of those is that the Chinese embassy in Dhaka be informed that the contractor time and again violated the safety rules.

It also recommended giving compensation to the families of the victims and going ahead with the project only after ensuring safety.

(Our correspondents in Narayanganj and Mymensingh contributed to this report.)

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Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-2)
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