

MYANMAR More than 1m displaced since coup: UN

AFP, Yangon

More than one million people have been displaced in Myanmar since the military coup last year, the United Nations children's agency has said.

The Southeast Asian nation has been in turmoil since the military ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's government last year, sparking widespread armed resistance.

The junta has responded with a crackdown that rights groups say includes razing villages, mass extrajudicial killings and airstrikes on civilians.

Since the coup and as of last month, 1,017,000 people have been internally displaced, UNICEF said in a statement on Thursday.

It added that more than half of those forced to flee are in the country's northwest Sagaing region, which has seen some of the fiercest fighting.



Sittipong Taothawong (L) comforts his wife Kanjana Buakumchan as she holds their child's milk bottle and blanket while standing outside the nursery in Na Klang in Thailand's northeastern Nong Bua Lam Phu province yesterday, the day after a former police officer killed at least 37 people, including 22 children, in a mass shooting at the site.

PHOTO: AFP

WB spent \$15b on fossil fuel projects since Paris deal

AFP, Washington

The World Bank has pumped \$14.8 billion into fossil fuel projects globally in the period following the landmark Paris climate accord, a report said Thursday.

One of the main ways the Bank continued to fund fossil fuels was by exploiting a "major loophole" by lending to intermediaries such as banks or financial institutions and by acting as a guarantor in case a country did not meet its obligations, said the report compiled by an NGO coalition called The Big Shift Global. The World Bank pledged to end funding fossil fuel industry in 2018.

In a statement to AFP, the World Bank said, "We dispute the findings of the report: it makes inaccurate assumptions about the World Bank Group's lending.

European leaders show 'unity' in face of Russia's war

AGENCIES

Leaders from across Europe met Thursday in Prague for the inaugural summit of a new forum aimed at bringing the continent together in the face of Russia's aggression, with Ukraine's president urging more support for Kyiv.

The first gathering of the "European Political Community" at the grand Prague Castle complex brought together a disparate grouping of 44 nations from the Caucasus in the southeast to Iceland in the northwest.

Russian President Vladimir

Putin, who was not invited, loomed over the meeting as discussions focused on the economic and security turmoil sparked by his invasion of Ukraine.

"We displayed the unity of 44 European countries which as 44 very clearly expressed their condemnation of Russia's war and their support for Ukraine," French President Emmanuel Macron said.

The experimental format — a brainchild of Macron — was billed as a "new platform for political coordination", but there were few concrete outcomes beyond a photo of the assembled leaders.

Moldova would host the next edition of the summit in spring, followed by Spain and Britain.

Much of the action from the summit happened on the sidelines as leaders grabbed bilateral meetings with their counterparts.

British Prime Minister Liz Truss called Macron a "friend" — far warmer words than she used during her bid for the top job when she said the "jury's out" on the French leader.

"I do hope this is a new phase of our common relations, and this is the beginning of the day after," Macron responded.

INDIAN HIMALAYAS AVALANCHE Death toll hits 26

AFP, New Delhi

At least 26 people have been confirmed dead after an avalanche struck climbers in the Indian Himalayas, officials said yesterday, with bad weather hampering the fourth day of search and rescue efforts. A group of 41 climbing trainees and their teachers were caught in Tuesday's massive snowslide near the summit of Mount Draupadi ka Danda II in the northern state of Uttarakhand. Three members of the expedition remained missing, the official added.

J&K receives most tourists in 75 years

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's Jammu and Kashmir has received 16.2 million tourists this year, the most since British colonial rule ended in 1947, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government said was a sign of economic development in the strife-torn region. Known for its snow-topped Himalayan mountains, fast-flowing rivers, Mughal-era gardens, Alpine meadows and houseboats around a beautiful lake, the federal territory has seen a resurgence in domestic tourism since most Covid-19 curbs ended this year. The record tourist arrivals are a boon for Modi's government, which withdrew Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir's special rights in 2019, stripping it of its status as a state in reforms it said were aimed at integrating it with the rest of the country. The vast majority of visitors in Kashmir are domestic tourists. Foreign tourists need a special pass to visit most parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pebbles, world's oldest dog, dies at 22

FP, Washington



Pebbles, a Toy Fox Terrier that held the record as the world's oldest dog, died on Wednesday at the age of 22, according to Guinness World Records. Born on March 28, 2000, on Long Island, in New York state, the female terrier lived most of her life in to South Carolina, giving birth to 32 puppies over the years. Pebbles passed away of natural causes, her owner, Julie Gregory, wrote on Instagram.

Rights defenders

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and peaceful co-existence." "It is not one person, one organisation, one quick fix," she said in an interview. "It is the united efforts of what we call civil society that can stand up against authoritarian states and, or, human rights abuses."

She called on Belarus to release Bialyatski from prison and said the prize was not aimed against Putin. Belarusian security police in July last year raided offices and homes of lawyers and human rights activists, detaining Bialyatski and others in a new crackdown on opponents of Lukashenko.

Authorities had moved to shut down non-state media outlets and

human rights group, was ordered to be dissolved last December for breaking a law requiring certain civil society groups to register as foreign agents, capping a year of crackdowns on Kremlin critics unseen since Soviet days.

Memorial board member Anke Giesen said winning the award was recognition of its human rights work and of colleagues who continue to suffer "unspeakable attacks and reprisals" in Russia.

The award to Memorial is the second in a row to a Russian, after the prize to journalist Dmitry Muratov last year, shared with Maria Ressa of the Philippines.

The executive director of Ukraine's

Australia seeks

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plants for food, medicine and oxygen production, which are all crucial to establishing human life on the Moon," the researchers said in a statement.

Caitlin Byrt, an Associate Professor from the Australian National University in Canberra, said the research was also relevant to food security fears driven by climate change.

"If you can create a system for growing plants on the moon, then you can create a system for growing food in some of the most challenging environments on Earth," Byrt said in a statement.

The Lunaria One organisation is running the project, which involves scientists from Australia and Israel.

'We want justice'

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"They later took me to a court where I said what they told me to say. I am not involved with any robbery. I want justice," said Kirton.

They said these when Bangladesh Minority Watch President Rabindra Ghosh visited their home in Dhamrai yesterday.

There should be a judicial inquiry into the allegations, Rabindra said, adding that his organisation, on behalf of the victims, will file a case against the policemen concerned.

The laws clearly state the procedure to interrogate a suspect and for how long one can be kept detained. The officers seem to have violated laws, he said.

"The woman was brutally tortured for three days in police custody. Police also strung her son by his hands from the ceiling and beat him in front of her. This is inhuman. Police cannot do this. It is violation of human rights," he told reporters.

"We strongly condemn the incident. We demand a judicial inquiry and punishment of those involved," Rabindra added.

According to the allegations made by the family, a robbery took place at the home of Godadhar Malo, 68, a farmer of Dhamrai's Majhipara area, on June 18. Godadhar filed a case the next day.

The DB was later tasked with the investigation.

Last month, DB officers took Godadhar's daughter-in-law Shyamoli Halder Rupa, 35, her 14-year-old son Diganta Halder and Kirton in custody.

Rupa alleged the officers tortured her and her son to force her to say that she was involved in the robbery.

The incident has recently come to light following media reports.

DB officers concerned told The Daily Star last week that the allegations were false.

Govt to ask IMF for 4.5b loan assistance

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the country's climate financing needs and to cushion the impact of war in Ukraine.

Part of it will come from IMF's newly created Resilience and Sustainability Trust. Loans from RST come with a 20-year maturity and a ten-and-a-half-years grace period. The IMF has come up with a three-tier interest rate structure based on

the country's income.

Bangladesh can get up to \$1.5 billion from the RST, which targets specific areas within the mandate of the IMF.

The government's request for a fund programme will ease the financing constraints and allow for advancing the efforts to manage fiscal, monetary and financial stability risks in light of climate change and recent global developments.

Sources said the Bangladesh delegation will also meet Martin Rauser, World Bank vice president for South Asia, next week to discuss a \$500 million loan.

The delegation is also likely to discuss a \$1 billion loan from the World Bank.

Bangladesh is expected to get more than \$3 billion from the World Bank, IMF and other lenders this fiscal year.

Two human traffickers arrested

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Middle Eastern countries. Before that, they had also trafficked many others, mainly to Middle Eastern countries, he added.

Mohiuddin said the gang collected passports of 521 people through their brokers from different parts of Bangladesh in the last two years and took Tk 2.3 lakh for sending each of them to Middle Eastern countries

and Tk 6.7 lakh for sending them to Europe.

The gang members used to convince victims by showing them fake appointment letters and other documents of foreign companies, the official said.

But, in the last two years, Mahbubul was not able to send anyone abroad and did not even submit passports to any travel agency to start the process,

he said. The arrestees were planning to leave the country with the swindled money, said Mohiuddin.

Rab officials said the gang earlier sent some people abroad promising high-paying jobs there. But instead of giving them jobs, the gang's foreign counterparts confined the job seekers and tortured them for ransom.

Rab official lands in jail over rape of woman

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posting with Narayanganj Rab, he continued to communicate with her, read the case statement.

On Wednesday night, he came to the woman's house and raped her.

Sensing the incident, her relatives and neighbours detained Mahabir and handed him over to police on Thursday morning, said Masum Ahmed, chairman of Domar Upazila Parishad.

The case was filed Thursday afternoon.

Mahamudunnabi, officer-in-charge of Domar Police Station, said the accused was produced before the court after the victim filed the case.

Amini died of illness

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eight," it said in a statement. Amini's bereaved parents have filed a complaint against the officers involved, and one of her cousins living in Iraq has told AFP she died of "a violent blow to the head".

The United States has called for accountability for Amini's death "after injuries sustained while in police custody". On Thursday, Washington imposed sanctions on seven Iranian officials over a shutdown of internet access and the crackdown, reports Reuters.

Other young girls have lost their lives at the protests, but Amnesty International says Iran has been forcing televised confessions out of their families to "absolve themselves of responsibility for their deaths".

The mother of 16-year-old Nika Shahkarami, who died after going missing on September 20, insisted on Thursday she was killed by the state after joining an anti-hijab protest in Tehran.

Nasrin Shahkarami also accused

the authorities of threatening her to make a forced confession over the death of her daughter Nika.

Iran's judiciary has since denied reports the security forces killed another teenage girl, Sarina Esmailzadeh, at a rally in Karaj, west of Tehran.

Its website quoted a prosecutor as saying an investigation showed Esmailzadeh, also 16, had "committed suicide" by jumping from a building.

In a widening crackdown, Iran has blocked access to social media, including Instagram and WhatsApp and launched a campaign of mass arrests.

Protesters have sought ways to avoid detection, with schoolgirls hiding or blurring their faces while shouting "Death to the dictator" and defacing images of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in verified videos.

Another form of protest emerged yesterday morning, with fountains in Tehran appearing to pour blood after an artist turned their waters red to reflect the deadly crackdown.



Ales Bialyatski



Memorial



Center for Civil Liberties

human right groups after mass protests the previous August against a presidential election the opposition said was rigged.

"The (Nobel) Committee is sending a message that political freedoms, human rights and active civil society are part of peace," Dan Smith, head of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, told Reuters.

The prize will boost morale for Bialyatski and strengthen the hand of the Center for Civil Liberties, an independent Ukrainian human rights organisation, which is also focused on fighting corruption, he said.

"Although Memorial has been closed in Russia, it lives on as an idea that it's right to criticize power and that facts and history matter," Smith added.

In Geneva, the Russian ambassador to the United Nations said Moscow was not concerned about the award. "We don't care about this," Gennady Gatilov told Reuters.

In Belarus, the award was not reported by state media.

Founded in 1989 to help the victims of political repression during the Soviet Union and their relatives, Memorial campaigns for democracy and civil rights in Russia and former Soviet republics. Its co-founder and first leader was Sakharov, the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Memorial, Russia's best-known

Center for Civil Liberties, Oleksandra Romantsova, said winning the award was "incredible".

"It is great, thank you," she told the secretary of the award committee, Olav Njoelstad, during a phone call that was filmed and broadcast on Norwegian television. The group also tweeted it was proud.

The Nobel Peace Prize, worth 10 million Swedish crowns, or about \$900,000, will be presented in Oslo on December 10, the anniversary of the death of Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel, who founded the awards in his 1895 will.

Shakib surprise

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According to sources, the team was unhappy with the latest occurrence.

Bangladesh posted 146 for eight in chase of Pakistan's 167 for five, slumping to a 21-run defeat in the opening fixture.

Their T20I approach was still perplexing and their plans ahead of a World Cup appear to be hovering between looking for a more positive approach to one that is sustainable, both ominous portents at the moment.

The younger stars have not exactly shined and Shakib finds himself having to rein in plenty of challenges ahead of the second game against New Zealand on October 9.