



US concerned over political violence

UN calls for ‘free expression, media freedom and peaceful assembly’

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US has expressed concern about reports of intimidation, political violence, police harassment, arrests of opposition party members and restrictions on the ability of the opposition parties to meet and hold peaceful rallies.

“We call on the government to respect and to protect the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly,” Ned Price, spokesman for the US state department, told a press briefing in Washington DC on Tuesday.

Price went on to call on all parties in Bangladesh to respect the rule of law and to refrain from violence, harassment and intimidation.

“We call on the government of Bangladesh to ensure that no party or candidate threatens, incites, or conducts violence against another party or candidate.”

Genuine elections require the ability of all candidates to engage voters free from violence, harassment and intimidation, he said.

“We encourage the government authorities to investigate these reports of violence thoroughly, transparently, and impartially, and to hold the perpetrators to account,” Price added.

Meanwhile, Gwyn Lewis, the United Nations resident coordinator in Bangladesh, issued a similar statement

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Bangabandhu's quote in UNGA resolution

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The historic quote of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, “friendship to all, malice towards none”, has been incorporated in a UN General Assembly resolution yesterday.

In the global context of the post-Covid world and the Russia-Ukraine war, the resolution titled “International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace, 2023” was introduced by Turkmenistan at the UNGA plenary and was adopted unanimously.

Bangabandhu's historic

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Tofazzel made new principal secy

Salahuddin new secy to PMO



Tofazzel Hossain Miah



Mohammad Salahuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appointed Senior Secretary Tofazzel Hossain Miah as the principal secretary to the prime minister.

He will replace Ahmad Kaikaus who will serve as the alternative executive director of the World Bank for the next three years.

Meanwhile, PM's Personal Secretary Mohammad Salahuddin has been made secretary to the Prime Minister's Office.

The public administration ministry issued gazette notifications in this regard yesterday.

Lately, there have been talks on the appointments of officials in three top civil service positions – cabinet secretary, principal secretary to the prime minister, and secretary to the PMO.

No announcement, however, has been made on the appointment of cabinet secretary.

The three-year contract with current Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam will expire on December 15.

Newly appointed Tofazzel served in the PMO for more

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POLICE CRACKDOWN IN CITY

Hoteliers count losses as guests stay clear

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Many hoteliers and owners of shared living facilities in the capital are facing losses due to a sharp decline in guests since the ongoing police drives started on December 1.

The number of guests in some residential hotels is so poor that some hoteliers were even forced to temporarily shut down, said people involved in the business.

Potential guests are not going to hotels as police in uniform and in plain clothes often go to hotels and ask management not to rent rooms to a group of people, said staffers of different hotels in Tejguri Bazar, Green Road and Banani areas.

Many owners of shared living facilities and boarders also said police are conducting raids and even checking phones of boarders. Fearful of police action, many students and job seekers residing in the facilities left.

“As the number of guests decreased sharply since the beginning of this month, the owners instructed us to keep our hotel shut since morning

today [yesterday],” said Abul Bashar, a staffer of Royal Grand Hotel in East Tejguri Bazar in the capital yesterday.

The decision was taken to avoid trouble, he said, adding that they will decide on reopening the hotel after December 10.

The manager of New Grand Hotel in Karwan Bazar area said, “Out of 46 rooms, only four are occupied.”

Naim Islam, manager of Hotel Green Place International on Green Road, said out of 60 rooms only 16 have guests.

Rana Chandra Das, who resides in a lodging facility in Green Road, said he has been living in a room with four others for the last one and a half months.

He came from Kishoreganj to complete a three-month Korean Language course.

He said police took his name and address and even checked his mobile phone, which frightened him.

The Police Headquarters instructed different police units across the country on November 29 to launch a special drive to ward off any untoward incident ahead of December 16.

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Landslide kills 4 of a family in Cox's Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

Four members of a family, including three women, died in a landslide in Cox's Bazar's Ramu upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Azizur Rahman, 50, Rahima Begum, 40, Nasima Begum, 22, and Dilluz, 70.

The incident took place around 7:30pm at Kauwarkhop union's Lotghona area, said Md Hasan Chowdhury, a firefighter in Ramu.

He said the tin-shed house where the family resided was built at the bottom of the hill.

The fire service suspected that the hill was cut, leading to the tragic incident, Hasan said.

On information, fire service officials rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies, he added.

The bodies were handed over to police for further legal procedure.

Shamsul Alam, chairman of Kawarkhop Union Parishad, said the deceased are members of the same family.

Paleontologists unearth 100m-yr-old elasmosaur fossil



CNN ONLINE

The discovery of a giant 100 million year-old marine reptile's skeleton in Australia has been hailed by researchers as a breakthrough that may provide vital clues about prehistoric life.

The remains of the 6-meter (19 feet) tall juvenile long-necked plesiosaur, also known as an elasmosaur, were found by a trio of amateur fossil hunters on a cattle station in the western Queensland outback in August.

Espen Knutsen, senior curator of palaeontology at the Queensland Museum, likened the discovery to that of the Rosetta Stone – the Ancient Egyptian block of granite rediscovered in 1799 that helped experts to decode hieroglyphics.

“We have never found a body and a head together and this could hold the key to future research in this field,” Knutsen said in a statement yesterday that confirmed the discovery, adding it could give paleontologists greater insight into the origins, evolution and ecology of the cretaceous period in the region.

“Because these plesiosaurs were two-thirds neck, often the head would be separated from the body after death, which makes it very hard to find

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Biman MD, CEO Zahid removed

STAR REPORT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines Managing Director and CEO Zahid Hossain was removed from his post yesterday.

Shafiul Azim, an additional secretary attached to the Cabinet Division, was made the new MD of the national flag carrier, the public administration ministry said in a gazette.

Zahid was removed from his post after his name surfaced in connection with the question paper leak of a test for 10 posts of electricians, mechanics, welders, painters, operators and tailors.

The recruitment test was scheduled to be held on October 21, 2022.

Around two hours before the exam, the recruitment process was suspended as the question paper was allegedly leaked.



Farmers harvesting ripe Aman and threshing the paddy on a field in Sylhet's Companiganj upazila yesterday. With the arrival of early winter came the Aman harvest and the farmers are happy with this year's yield. After threshing, they will collect the wheat in bags and take them back home.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Print media journos' database on the way

Bangladesh Press Council to prepare the online directory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Press Council is set to prepare an online database of print media journalists to “prevent false and yellow journalism”.

The database is being prepared according to the ‘Bangladesh Press Council Journalist (Print Media) Online Database Policy’.

Journalists can apply for registration by submitting an application form recommended by the editor or publisher or by the district commissioner, wherever necessary, according to the notice from the press council yesterday.

An undergraduate degree is the minimum academic qualification for new entrants, while the condition has been relaxed for those already working in the industry at least for five years.

If a journalist is convicted of a criminal offence, they can apply for registration three years after serving the penalty terms.

Once registered in the database, the print media journalists will be issued an identity card and they will be able to participate in workshops and training sessions arranged by the council.

If the journalist gets accused in court for carrying out

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