

Power returns to Pakistan after outage

AFP, Islamabad

The national power grid was restored in Pakistan, the energy minister said yesterday, a day after a nationwide breakdown left most of the country's 220 million people without electricity and caused tens of millions of dollars in industry losses.

The outage started around 7:30 am (0230 GMT) on Monday, a failure linked to a cost-cutting measure as Pakistan grapples with an economic crisis.

Energy Minister Khuram Dasgiri Khan said the grid was repaired at around 5:15 am but load-shedding would continue over the next two days as coal and nuclear plants were brought back online.

"There is a need to invest in the energy sector, especially to improve the distribution system, which has long been neglected," he told reporters in Islamabad.

PM Shehbaz Sharif expressed "sincere regrets" for the inconvenience.



People pay their respects in front of a makeshift memorial for victims of a mass shooting outside the Star Dance Studio in Monterey Park, California, US, on Monday. US President Joe Biden yesterday called for Congress to act quickly to ban assault weapons, as California reeled from two deadly mass shootings in less than 48 hours.

PHOTO: AFP

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA Seven dead in new mass shooting

AFP, Half Moon Bay

A suspected gunman was in custody Monday over the killing of seven people in a rural community in northern California, just two days after a mass shooting at a Lunar New Year celebration near Los Angeles.

The latest bloodshed occurred at two farms around Half Moon Bay, a coastal community south of San Francisco.

San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus said seven people were killed and one wounded in the twin shootings, and that a 67-year-old Half Moon Bay resident named Chunli Zhao had been taken into custody.

Reports said the dead were Chinese farmworkers, and that Zhao had worked at one of the farms.

Corpus said deputies had been dispatched to two nurseries around Half Moon Bay, a rural spot known for surfing contests and a pumpkin festival, around mid-afternoon on Monday.

Four people were dead at one of them and one was critically wounded, while three more fatally wounded victims were found at a second location.

Corpus said children were present at one of the sites.

"It was in the afternoon when kids were out of school and for children to witness it is unspeakable," she said.

Corpus said Zhou then drove to a sheriff's substation in Half Moon Bay, where ABC7 crews captured dramatic footage of him being pulled to the ground by armed officers.

At the second shooting location, a short distance from the mushroom farm where four people were killed, sheriff's deputies' cars packed a roadside business plaza, home to shops offering party rentals, landscaping supplies and other services.

Ardern makes last bow as NZ PM

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern said yesterday she was grateful for her time in office, insisting that a sustained barrage of online abuse was not the reason for her shock resignation.

The 42-year-old said last week she no longer had "enough in the tank" after a turbulent five years, during which she steered the country through natural disasters, its worst ever terror attack and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chris Hipkins, who will take over as prime minister, has said Ardern experienced "utterly abhorrent" abuse while leading the country. Ardern however said she would not describe it that way.

While on her last public engagement as prime minister, visiting the Maori settlement of Ratana in the North Island, she said she would "hate" for her departure to be seen as "a negative commentary on New Zealand".

"I leave feeling gratitude for having this wonderful role for so many years," she told reporters from the birthplace of one of the country's most influential indigenous political movements.

The popularity of Ardern's Labour government has soured in recent months, hampered by a looming recession and a resurgent conservative opposition.

Hipkins will be sworn in as prime minister on Wednesday, saying it was "bittersweet" to replace his friend of 20 years.

"I'm really honoured to take on the role, but Jacinda is also a very good friend of mine," he told reporters yesterday.

Hipkins, 44, admitted there were "moments when it sinks in, and moments when it doesn't feel quite real".

Ardern said she would now be stepping back from domestic politics, and offered some advice for Hipkins.



China offers debt aid to crisis-hit Sri Lanka

Colombo sources unclear if Beijing's letter will be enough for IMF

REUTERS, New Delhi/Colombo

The Export-Import Bank of China has offered Sri Lanka a two-year moratorium on its debt and said it will support the country's efforts to secure a \$2.9 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund, according to a letter reviewed by Reuters.

Regional rivals China and India are the biggest bilateral lenders to Sri Lanka, a country of 22 million people that is facing its worst economic crisis in seven decades.

India wrote to the IMF earlier this month, saying it would commit to supporting Sri Lanka with financing and debt relief, but the island nation also needs the backing of China in order to reach a final agreement with the global lender.

However, China's January 19 letter, sent to the finance ministry, may not be enough for Sri Lanka to immediately gain the IMF's approval for the critical loan, a Sri Lankan source with knowledge of the matter said.

According to the letter, China EximBank said it was going to provide "an extension on the debt service due in 2022 and 2023 as an

immediate contingency measure" based on Sri Lanka's request.

At the end of 2020, China EximBank had loaned Sri Lanka \$2.83 billion which is 3.5 percent of the island's debt, according to an IMF report released in March last year. "You will not have to repay the principal and interest due of the bank's loans during the above-mentioned period," the letter said.



"Meanwhile, we would like to expedite the negotiation process with your side regarding medium and long-term debt treatment in this window period."

Sri Lanka owed Chinese lenders \$7.4 billion, or nearly a fifth of its public external debt, by the end of last year, calculations by the China Africa Research Initiative showed.

"The bank will support Sri Lanka in your application for the IMF

Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to help relieve the liquidity strain," China's letter said.

One Sri Lankan source, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the confidential discussions, said the island nation had hoped for a clear assurance from Beijing on the lines of what India provided to the IMF. "China was expected to do more," the source said. "This is much less than what is required and expected of them."

In a letter directly addressed to the IMF, India said last week that the financing or debt relief provided by Export-Import Bank of India would be consistent with restoring debt sustainability under the IMF-supported program.

Another government source told Reuters that Sri Lanka would likely share China's letter with the IMF and seek their opinion on its contents.

"That may be the best way to understand if this is in line with the IMF's expectations or stronger assurances are needed," the source said. It is unclear what debt relief major lenders such as China - the world's largest bilateral lender - and India are willing to make further down the line.

BBC SERIES ON MODI Top Indian univ bans screening

AFP, New Delhi

A top Indian university has banned the screening of a BBC documentary about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's role during deadly 2002 sectarian riots, after his government attempted to block its spread online. The programme alleges that the Hindu nationalist Modi, premier of Gujarat state at the time, ordered police to turn a blind eye to an orgy of violence there that left at least 1,000 people dead, most of them minority Muslims. Students at Jawaharlal Nehru University had planned to screen documentary yesterday.

'Doomsday Clock' moves closest ever to midnight

AFP, Washington

The "Doomsday Clock" symbolizing the perils to humanity moved its closest ever to midnight yesterday amid the Ukraine war, nuclear tensions and the climate crisis.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, which describes the clock as a "metaphor for how close humanity is to self-annihilation," moved its hands from 100 seconds to midnight to 90 seconds to midnight.

A decision to reset the hands of the symbolic clock is taken each year by the Bulletin's science and security board and its board of sponsors, which includes 11 Nobel laureates.

Mother's name too will do

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Attorney General Amit Das Gupta represented the state during the hearing on the petition yesterday.

Rights organisations Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, and Naripokkho filed the writ petition as public interest litigation to the HC in 2009 challenging the refusals by different education boards to issue registration cards to the SSC and HSC candidates, who could not fill out the SIFs with the names of their fathers and mothers.

In the petition, they said candidates born in brothels could not name their fathers and they would be deprived of education if they were not allowed to fill in the forms.

Following the petition, another HC bench on August 3, 2009, issued a rule upon the government to explain why the refusal to give admit cards to such SSC and HSC candidates should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the HC also asked the government authorities concerned to show cause as to why they should not be directed

to amend the student information form to include identification information regarding the name of the father, or mother, or guardian of the candidates.

In her reaction, Barrister Sara Hossain said, "We are delighted that the High Court has delivered this significant judgment to remove a gender discriminatory practice and to take forward recognition of the right of every person to an identity and to education."

"It is an overdue step to take forward the promise of gender equality enshrined in our constitution, especially to make sure that Digital Bangladesh is gender inclusive."

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad General Secretary Maleka Banu said the landmark verdict would pave the way for establishing the rights to education of all children, and end discrimination regarding guardianship, according to a statement of BLAST.

In the same statement, lawyer Aynunnahar Siddiqua Lipi said the constitutional rights of education of the children, who don't have their

parents' identities, will be protected through this verdict.

She also demanded immediate implementation of the judgment.

Supreme Court lawyer Nahid Mahtab, also a former deputy attorney general, said the significance of this judgment is that a single mother can be a guardian and a parent and the father's name shall not be the only measure of identity when his presence is never there.

"This will support single mothers to raise their children independently in a patriarchal society like ours," said Nahid.

Tasmiah Nuhya Ahmed, another SC lawyer, said, "It is expected that through this verdict we shall be able to break the glass ceiling, and mothers' right to guardianship of their children shall soon become a reality."

Ishrat Hasan, another SC lawyer, said the HC verdict is a landmark decision in upholding the dignity of human beings, and it will bring a positive change in the society.

Dhaka education board Chairman Prof Tapan said they would implement the HC verdict.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS UN aid chief raises concerns with Taliban

REUTERS, Kabul

The United Nations' aid chief visited Kabul on Monday and raised concerns over women's education and work with the Taliban administration's acting minister of foreign affairs, an Afghan ministry statement said.

The Taliban-run administration last month ordered NGOs not to allow most female employees to work, prompting many aid agencies to partially suspend operations in the midst of a humanitarian crisis unfolding during a bitterly cold winter.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths raised the issue of women's education and work and how this affected the UN's operations, according to a ministry of foreign affairs statement.

Speaking about Griffiths's visit, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Griffiths would engage the Taliban administration "with the same message that we've been delivering since the beginning on the need to rollback the policies that were put in place" on women.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
শ্রমিকদের জন্যে মজাদার ও নিরাপত্তা

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Wage Earners' Welfare Board
Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE):
Reintegration of Returning Migrants
Prabashi Kallayan Bhaban
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www.wewb.gov.bd

No. 49.04.0000.022.00.057.2023-26 Date: 23.01.2023

Amendment of e-Tender Notice-05

Amendment has been done in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following Tender ID

Sl	Package No. & Tender ID	Name of Scheme	Tendering Method	Previous Last Selling Date & Last Submission Date of Documents	Amended Last Selling Date & Last Submission Date of Documents
01	GD-09 & 734859	Supplying of Computer, Laptop, Printer, UPS and Scanner for PMU in Dhaka.	OTM (NCT)	24-Jan-2023 13:00 & 24-Jan-2023 15:00	01-Feb-2023 13:00 & 01-Feb-2023 15:00
02	GD-09(A) & 734862	Supplying of Computer, Printer, UPS and Scanner for PMU at Welfare Center of 30 Districts.	OTM (NCT)	24-Jan-2023 13:00 & 24-Jan-2023 15:00	01-Feb-2023 13:00 & 01-Feb-2023 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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