

Sudan truce in danger

Residents report fighting, warplanes; activists complain of severe human rights abuses

REUTERS, Khartoum

Artillery fire could be heard in parts of Khartoum and warplanes flew overhead yesterday, residents said, raising fears that intense fighting would erupt and shatter Sudanese hopes raised by an internationally-monitored ceasefire.

Some other residents reported relative calm early yesterday, the first full day of a truce that is being tracked by Saudi Arabia and the United States and is meant to allow for the delivery of humanitarian relief.

Activists wrote to the United Nations envoy to Sudan complaining of severe human rights abuses against civilians that they said took place as the fighting raged.

After five weeks of fierce battles between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the warring



Pakistan and Afghan nationals living as refugees in Sri Lanka, demonstrate outside the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Colombo yesterday, demanding faster processing of their claims for resettlement in a third country.

PHOTO: AFP

India abusing G20 with Kashmir meet: Pak FM

AFP, Muzaffarabad

India is "abusing" its presidency of the G20 by holding a tourism conference in the portion of disputed Kashmir it controls, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari told AFP.

It is the first diplomatic event in the territory since Pakistan suspended trade and diplomatic ties with India in 2019, when New Delhi imposed direct rule on the part of Muslim-majority Kashmir it controls and enforced a heavy security lockdown.

"I wish I could say I was surprised, but I think that this is a continuation in what is becoming a norm now, of India's arrogance on the international stage," he told AFP in a Monday interview in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

"They're abusing their presidency of the G20 to push their colonial agenda, but if they think that by holding one event in occupied Kashmir they can silence the voice of the Kashmiri people, then I believe that they are truly mistaken."

The Indian-controlled portion has been roiled for decades by an

insurgency seeking independence or a merger with Pakistan, with tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and Kashmiri rebels killed in the conflict.

Non-G20 member Pakistan controls a smaller part, and says holding the tourism meeting from Monday to Wednesday in the territory violates international law, UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements.

The G20 participants -- made up of the European Union and the world's 19 top economies -- have been "put in a pretty awkward spot", said the 34-year-old Bhutto Zardari.

"Those countries who make it a point to remind us and protest how outrageous it is that international law has been violated in Europe: I believe that they should be just as outraged when international law is violated in Kashmir," he said, in a reference to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

China, which also claims the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in full as part of Tibet, has stood by Pakistan in condemning the meeting to promote tourism in the area -- renowned for its lakes, meadows and snow-capped mountains.

Imran Khan questioned on graft charges

Wins bail in multiple cases

REUTERS, Islamabad

Former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan was questioned by an anti-graft agency on corruption charges, his lawyer said yesterday, less than a week after he rejected a summons to appear and denounced allegations against him.

"He has joined investigation," said his lawyer, Faisal Chaudhry, referring to his questioning by officials of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). His wife, who also faces graft charges, had joined him but only Khan had been questioned as of early yesterday afternoon.

Khan also got a major relief yesterday when an anti-terrorism court granted him bail till June 8 in cases related to violence at the Judicial Complex in March.

Australia fetes Modi as 'the boss'

AFP, Sydney

Australia offered Narendra Modi a rock star welcome yesterday, lavishing praise on the Indian leader during a visit heavy on trade and light on criticism. Modi held a campaign-style rally at a 21,000-capacity Sydney arena yesterday,

with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese playing emcee. Lured by the world's most populous market and a counterweight to China's growing military, diplomatic and economic clout, Australia's government is layering on the charm. To chants of "Modi! Modi! Modi!" Albanese introduced his "dear friend" to a jazzed-up crowd of

Indian-Australians, who he praised for making Australia "stronger and more inclusive". "The last time I saw someone on the stage here was Bruce Springsteen and he didn't get the welcome that Prime Minister Modi has got," Albanese said. "Prime Minister Modi is the boss!" he said, breaking into a broad smile and boasting the pair had met six times in the past year. It was an unusually personal show of support for Modi, a nationalist leader who faces re-election next year.

BID TO SLASH IMMIGRATION UK gov announces overseas student curbs

AFP, London

The UK government yesterday announced a package of measures aimed at international students, including a ban on some family members, as ministers come under growing pressure to cut immigration. After a drop during the pandemic, net migration has been steadily on the rise and is reportedly expected to hit a record high this year. Official figures published last November estimated net migration to June 2022 at just over 500,000. Under the new proposals, only students on postgraduate courses designated as research programmes will be able to bring dependants to the UK while they study. Overseas students will be prevented from switching "out of the student route into work routes" before their studies have been completed. There will also be "improved and more enforcement activity" and a clamp down on "unscrupulous agents" using education as a cover for immigration, according to a government statement. Some 136,000 visas were issued to the dependants of international students last year -- up eight-fold from the 16,000 in 2019, Home Secretary Suella Braverman said. The minister said overseas students played an important part in supporting the UK economy.



factions on Saturday agreed to a seven day truce that began at 9:45 pm (1945 GMT) on Monday, aimed to allow for the delivery of aid.

The ceasefire deal, reached in talks in Jeddah, has raised hopes of a pause in a war that has driven nearly 1.1 million people from their homes, including more than 250,000 who have fled to neighbouring countries, threatening to destabilise a volatile region.

"Our only hope is that the truce succeeds, so that we can return to our normal life, feel safe, and go back to work again," said Khartoum resident Atef Salah El Din, 42.

Although fighting has continued through previous ceasefires, this was the first to be formally agreed following negotiations.

The ceasefire deal includes for the first time a monitoring mechanism involving the army and the RSF as well as representatives from Saudi Arabia and the United States, which brokered the agreement after talks in Jeddah. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the monitoring mechanism would be "remote", without giving details.

"If the ceasefire is violated, we'll know, and we will hold violators accountable through our sanctions and other tools at our disposal," he said in a video message.

"The Jeddah talks have had a narrow focus. Ending violence and bringing assistance to the Sudanese people. A permanent resolution of this conflict will require much more," he added.



A man writes a book on his bed in a shelter for evacuees from a Ukraine's war-torn region, in Lviv Polytechnic National University yesterday, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

FIGHT AGAINST DELHI ORDINANCE Mamata extends support to Arvind Kejriwal

AGENCIES

Extending support to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal against the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday urged all opposition parties to oppose the ordinance in the Rajya Sabha.

If the Centre's bill to convert the ordinance is defeated in Rajya Sabha, "it will be the Semi-final before 2024," said the Delhi chief minister, who is on a mission to unite the opposition on the issue and defeat the Centre's bill on the matter in Rajya Sabha.

"This (the fight for control) is not just about Delhi. Even the West Bengal Governor does the same thing. Even (Bhagwant) Mann is alleging same.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister told me that the Governor sitting on lot of bills," Kejriwal told the media during a briefing after the meet.

Mamata, one of the severest critics of the Centre, alleged that "atrocities" are being committed on Opposition-ruled states, reports NDTV online.

"Only the Supreme Court can save the country," she added.

But even the Supreme Court's rulings are being subverted, Mamata said. "What do they (the BJP) think? Are we their bonded labour? Are we their servants? We are worried that they may change the constitution and change the country's name to party's name. They want to bulldoze the constitution... It is a government of the bulldozer, by the bulldozer, for the bulldozer," Mamata said.

Rushdie says writing again

AFP, London

British author Salman Rushdie said yesterday he was back at his writing desk after being repeatedly stabbed at an event last year in the United States.

Rushdie returned to Britain to be formally invested as a "Companion of Honour" -- an exclusive royal accolade whose ranks are capped at 65 members.

Speaking after the ceremony at Windsor Castle outside London, the 75-year-old writer said it "took a while" but that he had resumed working.

Asked when he expects to complete his next book, he said: "Oh, I'll let you know."

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The Public Procurement Regulation-2008" ও তৎপরবর্তী সংশোধনী মোতাবেক আগামী ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বৎসরে ঠাকুরগাঁও জেলার নিম্নলিখিত আইটেম ওয়ারী বাৎসরিক দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত ঠিকাদার/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরযুক্ত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাবে।