

India gets new parliament building

Opposition parties to boycott inauguration by Modi

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate a new parliament complex tomorrow, the centrepiece of a \$2.4 billion project that aims to remake British colonial-era buildings in the capital's centre and give it a distinct Indian identity.

The inauguration, and the ongoing makeover of the heart of New Delhi based on Indian culture, traditions and symbols, comes a year before parliamentary elections in which Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will pitch its strong Hindu nationalist credentials, besides its performance in office over the last decade, to seek a third term.

The Modi government has also similarly renovated some of Hinduism's most revered pilgrimage centres since first sweeping to power in 2014.

The new, triangular-shaped parliament complex is just across from the heritage building built by British architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker in 1927, two decades before India's independence. The old parliament will be converted into a museum, the government has said.

It has said a new parliament building is badly needed as the existing structure "is highly stressed" for a number of reasons including capacity, infrastructure, technology and safety. But critics of Modi see the new parliament, designed by an architect from Gujarat, as an attempt to bolster his brand of nationalism as part of a personal legacy.

Opposition parties have announced a boycott of the inauguration. The president, the highest executive of the country, should open the new parliament and not Modi, the opposition members said.

Pakistan should

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government to accept the "scientific conclusion".

He came up with the remarks at a view exchange meeting at Chatogram Press Club while replying to a question from a journalist.

The team is part of an initiative of the European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) which is eyeing to get world recognition of the genocide.

In Bangladesh, the team has met with victims and witnesses of the genocide, researchers, journalists, academics, policymakers, and government representatives. They have also collected evidence and recorded statements in support of the genocide.

In the press meeting, Dr Anthonie Holslag and Chris Blackburn shared their field experiences with the journalists.

British EBF chairman Ansar Ahmed Ullah and Dutch EBF chairman Bikash Chowdhury Barua also spoke.

Harry van Bommel said he and his team would work on the findings and present those to the UK and Dutch press.

"We will come to Bangladesh again if needed. We will do whatever we can to get the recognition soon," he said.

Chattogram Press Club president Salauddin Reza presided over the programme while general secretary Deb Dulal Bhoumik and senior leaders of the press club were present at the event.

UN honours

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and Sainik Md Jasim Uddin was serving in MINUSCA, Central African Republic).

After receiving the medals, Ambassador Muhith signed the condolence book kept at the General Assembly Hall on this occasion and expressed his deepest condolences to the bereaved families of the fallen peacekeepers.

Bangladesh is currently the top contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations.

At present around 7,500 Bangladeshi peacekeepers are deployed in nine peacekeeping missions. So far, 166 peacekeepers from Bangladesh have lost their lives while serving in the UN peacekeeping operations.



Fireworks explode as the sails of the Opera House are illuminated with lights at the start of the Vivid Sydney festival in Sydney, Australia yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

'Our member states are divided'

UN peacekeeping chief laments body's divisions as 'Blue Helmets' turn 75

AFP, United Nations

The UN's head of peacekeeping operations told AFP that a divided Security Council was hampering the work of the so-called Blue Helmet forces, which turn 75 on Monday.

Jean-Pierre Lacroix said a long list of countries had benefited from the "millions of men and women who have served under the UN flag" since the forces' creation in 1948.

But he added that paralysis and conflict between the United States, Britain and France on one side and Russia and China on the other was making operations difficult.

"We are suffering from the fact that our



member states are divided," the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations said.

The French diplomat, 63, added that the UN was finding it "more difficult to achieve the ultimate objectives of peacekeeping: to deploy, support the implementation

of a peace agreement and then gradually leave."

Although the 15-member council regularly renews the mandates of peacekeeping missions, Lacroix called for more unity so they can better "influence the implementation of peace agreements and political processes."

May 29 marks the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, created in 2002 by the UN General Assembly to honor those who serve in conflict zones.

Because next Monday is the Memorial Day holiday in the United States, the UN celebrated the peacekeepers' 75th anniversary on Thursday, in memory of the "more than 4,200 peacekeepers killed in the cause of peace" since 1948.

Three migrants die as boat capsizes off Greek island

AFP, Athens

Three migrants were found dead off the Greek island of Mykonos yesterday after their boat capsized and up to 12 others missing, the Greek coastguard said.

The nationality of the victims, according to preliminary reports two women and a man, has not been confirmed by Greek authorities.

The coastguard is searching by ground, air and sea for up to others whom survivors said were missing after the boat overturned.

Witnesses said up to 17 people had been on the same boat, including five women and a seven-year-old child. Two men, a Palestinian and a Syrian, were rescued by the coastguard.

For several months, migrants have

sought to reach Italy from Turkey through Greece's southeast Cyclades islands which attract thousands of visitors each summer.

Non-profit groups say the new route is designed to avoid the northern Aegean Sea, where witnesses accuse Greek authorities of stepping up illegal pushbacks, accusations that Athens has long rejected.

Footage published by The New York Times on May 19 reportedly showed the forceful expulsion of a group of migrants, including a baby, being bundled into a van and then transferred to an inflatable raft and set adrift.

Interviewed by CNN, former prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said his government would investigate the incident and called such pushbacks "completely unacceptable".

come to Chattogram.

Early hours of yesterday, the victim reached Chattogram. Then, Hanif took her to a residence and raped her there, said Sanjoy Kumar Sinha officer-in-charge (OC) of Chattogram's Bandar Police Station.

In the morning, the victim filed a rape case against Hanif. Then police arrested Hanif and produced him before a court that sent him.

The victim was sent to a hospital for medical attention.

[Our correspondents from Benapole and Chattogram contributed to this report.]

4 men sent

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Later, the trio were produced before a court that sent them to jail, he added.

The victim filed a case against the four people; the police are trying to arrest the fourth accused.

Meanwhile, a Chattogram court sent another man to jail for raping a woman.

Gazi Md Hanif, 51, is a resident of Madhyam Goshaidanga in the city.

Police said Hanif developed a love affair over the phone with the victim, who lives in Kishoreganj.

At one stage, Hanif proposed to marry the woman and asked her to



Ambassador Muhammad Abdul Muhith, permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN in New York, receiving the Dag Hammarskjold Medal from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the General Assembly Hall on behalf of Bangladesh.

PHOTO: UNB

INTERNATIONAL

FBI files uncover plot to kill Queen Elizabeth II

AFP, London



A newly released cache of FBI files has revealed a potential plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth II during her 1983 visit to California. The possible threat followed a phone call made by "a man who claimed that his daughter had been killed in Northern Ireland by a rubber bullet", according to the document that also refers to a bar frequented by the IRA sympathisers. The queen and her husband Prince Philip visited the US in February and March 1983, and the trip passed off without incident. Four years earlier in 1979, IRA paramilitaries opposed to British rule in Northern Ireland killed Louis Mountbatten, an uncle of Philip, in a bomb attack. The file states that the man claimed he was going to attempt to harm the queen "by dropping some object off the Golden Gate Bridge onto the royal yacht Britannia when it sails underneath". Alternatively, he "would attempt to kill Queen Elizabeth when she visited Yosemite National Park". A separate file pointed out while FBI was unaware of any specific threats against the queen, "the possibility of threats against the British monarchy is ever present from the Irish Republican Army".

ASIANA FLIGHT

Passenger opens plane door mid-air

AFP, Seoul

A passenger opened an emergency exit on an Asiana Airlines flight as it was preparing to land yesterday, the carrier told AFP, adding that the plane landed safely but several people were hospitalised. The plane was carrying nearly 200 passengers as it approached the runway at Daegu International Airport in South Korea, about 240 kilometres (149 miles) southeast of Seoul, on a domestic flight. When the plane was around 200 meters (650 feet) above the ground, a passenger sitting near the emergency exit "opened the door manually by touching the lever", the carrier's representative told AFP. The incident caused some passengers to have breathing difficulties, and several people were taken to a hospital after the landing, Asiana said. Daegu police told AFP that they had taken in a man in his 30s for questioning over the incident.



Sudanese walk outside Bashir hospital in southern Khartoum yesterday as fighting eased in Sudan following a ceasefire. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced they had finally been able to begin distributing aid to "seven hospitals in Khartoum".

PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan hands

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there would not be mass trials in military courts.

But in response to a question, he also suggested that Khan could also be tried in a military court, saying: "as far as my own assessment and the evidence we have... this man is the architect of all this mess and planning, so yes he comes under this category."

Military courts are closed to outsiders, and no media is allowed. Rights groups have criticised the secretive nature of the process, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, Khan yesterday cancelled the basic membership of all leaders and office-bearers who had quit the PTI during the past few days, reports Dawn online.

Although several leaders have parted ways with PTI in the fallout of the May 9 violence, the most notable among them were senior vice president Fawad Chaudhry, former federal ministers Shireen Mazari, Aamer Mahmood Kiani and former adviser to PM Malik Amin Aslam.

It is not yet clear whether the PTI chief has revoked the membership of Asad Umar, who had stepped down as secretary general and a member of the core committee but had not quit the party altogether.

Khan also ordered the removal of defectors who were part of the party's core committee. They will no longer be part of PTI's WhatsApp groups and the social media accounts will be updated to modify the references of the defectors.

Minsk upholds sentence for Belarusian-Polish reporter

AFP, Moscow

A Belarus court yesterday rejected an appeal by a jailed Polish-Belarusian journalist against his eight-year prison sentence for reporting critically on President Alexander Lukashenko's regime.

Andrzej Poczobut, a 50-year-old correspondent for leading Polish daily Gazeta Wyborcza and active member of the Polish minority in Belarus, was sentenced in February.

He had extensively reported on mass protests against Lukashenko and refused to leave the Moscow-allied country after authorities unleashed a historic crackdown on dissent.

Belarus's Supreme Court said in a statement that the sentence was "left unchanged".

"The verdict has come into force," the court said.

Poczobut, who stood trial in his home city of Grodno near the Polish border, was found guilty of taking part in "actions harming national security" and "inciting hatred".

Poland, Belarus's western

EU-member neighbour, has condemned the trial and called for his release.

After Poczobut's appeal was rejected, Warsaw said it will slap new punitive measures against Lukashenko's regime next week.

"On Monday, I will announce the decision to add to the sanctions list several hundred representatives of the Lukashenko regime responsible for political repression, including repression against Poles living in Belarus," Polish Interior Minister Mariusz Kamiński said on Twitter.

Since brutally putting down the 2020 protests, the Minsk regime has jailed hundreds and forced most critics into exile.

According to human rights group Viasna, there are currently 1,511 political prisoners in Belarus.

Poland has become a hub for exiled Belarusians and Minsk often singles out Warsaw as a particular threat.

Belarus became even more isolated after allowing the Kremlin to use its territory as a launchpad for Moscow's Ukraine offensive.