

## Could not run govt without military's support

Says Pak PM, rails against Imran Khan for running hybrid regime

DAWN ONLINE

Railing against former prime minister Imran Khan for running a hybrid regime, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has admitted that even his government could not run without support from the military.

In an interview with Geo News broadcast on Thursday, when anchor Hamid Mir pointed out that Pakistan was among the most prominent examples of hybrid regimes in the world today, PM Shehbaz said that Khan had relied heavily on the former army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa.

"Mr Khan also received military support during his tenure. His government was a blend of various components, despite his accusations against others for the same. Every government requires backing from key sectors, including the military," he said.

Earlier, in a separate interview with journalist Ammar Masood, PM Shehbaz reacted to the publication of the purported text of a diplomatic cable describing a meeting between Pakistan's former US envoy and a senior State Department official.

Regarding the publication of the purported text of the diplomatic cipher, the premier said: "If the contents of the message are published in an international newspaper and prove to be true, it would indeed be a 'massive crime'."

Meanwhile, President Arif Alvi yesterday asked Shehbaz and outgoing leader of the opposition in the National Assembly (NA) Raja Riaz to propose a name for the appointment of caretaker premier by tomorrow.

In a letter written to Shehbaz and Riaz yesterday, the president recalled that he had dissolved the NA on the former's advice on Aug 9.



Special Task Force (STF) soldiers get off a vehicle as People's Revolution party activists hold placards during a demonstration in Colombo, Sri Lanka yesterday, to demand greater democratic freedoms as the government has moved to crackdown on large protests over economic hardships as the country emerges from its worst economic crisis.

PHOTO: AFP

## HAWAII WILDFIRE

# Death toll hits 55, may rise

1,000 buildings levelled; officials say recovery to take many years

REUTERS, Kahului

Maui's wildfires have killed at least 55 people, a toll expected to rise, and unleashed destruction on the resort town of Lahaina that will take many years and billions of dollars to rebuild, Hawaiian officials said.

Governor Josh Green said the inferno that reduced much of Lahaina to smoldering ruins was the worst natural disaster in the state's history, making thousands of people homeless and leveling as many as 1,000 buildings.

"It's going to take many years to rebuild Lahaina," Green said told a news conference on Thursday, as officials began to map out a plan to shelter the newly homeless

in hotels and tourist rental properties.

"It will be a new Lahaina that Maui builds in its own image with its own values," Green said of the city that draws 2 million tourists each year, or about 80 percent of the island's visitors.

The fast-moving inferno, which started on Tuesday, spread from the brush outside of town and ravaged the historic city of Lahaina that was once the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom. It was one of three major wildfires on Maui, all of them still burning, that were fuelled by dry conditions, a buildup of fuel and 60 mph (100 kph) gusts of wind.

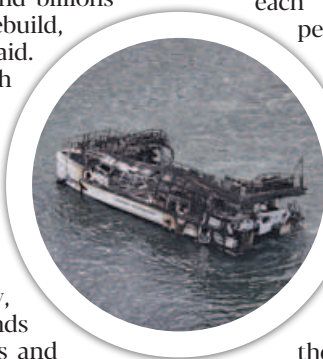
Even as firefighters continue to put out smaller fires and

search and rescue teams almost certainly have yet to recover all the dead, federal recovery dollars have started to flow along with an influx of supplies and equipment.

Among the incoming assistance were cadaver dogs from California and Washington that would aid search and rescue teams combing through the ruins, officials said.

"Understand this: Lahaina town is hallowed, sacred ground right now," Maui Police Chief John Pelletier said, referring to remains that have yet to be recovered. "We have to get them out."

Thousands of tourists and locals were evacuated from the western side of Maui, which has a year-round population of about 166,000, with some taking shelter on the island or on the neighboring island of Oahu. Tourists camped in the Kahului Airport, waiting for flights back home.



## Tiger visits

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The over 1-minute video has since gone viral on social media.

Mahabub Hossain, assistant conservator of forests (ACF) of Sarankhola Range, Sundarban East Forest Division, said three tigers, including a cub, were seen in the area before.

Tigers are roaming freely because of the strict implementation of conservation measures, and that might be the reason behind the frequent sightings of these elusive animals, he added.

The number of tigers have increased in the forest as the forest department has ensured a safe habitat for them, he claimed.

## Quit playing games

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After the brief rally, the activists marched to Malibagh level-crossing.

BNP activists and supporters from the capital and neighbouring districts took part in the two processions that ended around 5:00pm.

A large number of police armed with water cannons, and armoured vehicles were seen on the streets during the processions. The events caused severe traffic congestion on different streets in the areas.

## Foreigners

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[Foreigners] even believed it. Let them come and see if any persecution is taking place here," the minister said.

Replying to a query about the two US Congressmen's scheduled visit, the foreign minister said, "There are 435 Congress members in the US. It is normal for them to travel around the world. It's good that they are coming. They think Bangladesh is an impoverished, cyclone-prone country. They will get to see that we are not poor and we welcome them."

The foreign minister further said the US Congressmen are coming to visit the Rohingya camps. "The US provides assistance to Rohingyas, and the Congress members are perhaps coming to see if the money is being properly utilised."

## 51 lives lost to floods

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suddenly on Thursday. But we could not take her to hospital as the road was damaged," said Youngnao Mro, a member of Gelenga Union Parishad in Ruma upazila.

Crops of over 8,253 hectares have been destroyed in Bandarban, said Sha Mozahid Uddin, deputy commissioner of the district.

Road communications between Bandarban and other parts of the country, and power supply resumed on Thursday night after three days.

Floodwaters receded from the district town, but some low-lying areas of the district are still under water, said locals.

Md Saifullah Majumdar, the relief and rehabilitation officer of Chattogram, said it has so far been confirmed that 16 people died in five upazilas of the district. But they have no information about the missing people.

Among the deceased, seven were in Satkania, four in Lohagara, two in Chandanaish, and one each in Banshkhal, Raozan and Chattogram city, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"It is not possible to say the extent of the damage caused by the

flood. We are trying to collect this information with the help of various upazila government offices and public representatives. It will take at least one more week to assess the damage," he added.

Out of 15 upazilas of Chattogram, Satkania, Banshkhal and Chandanaish are the worst affected. Flood also hit the low-lying areas of Patiya, Anwara, Raozan, Rangunia, Sitakunda, Mirsarai, Hathazari and Fatikchhari upazilas, according to the local administrations.

In Rangamati, at least five people, including four children, have so far drowned in Baghaichhari upazila in the last two days.

Baghaichhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Rumana Akter confirmed the deaths.

Crops of over 3,135 hectares have gone under water in the district, according to the local agriculture office.

At least 46 houses were damaged by landslides in the district, said the report of the disaster management and relief ministry.

[Our correspondents in Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Chattogram and Rangamati contributed to this report.]

## Nobody will put you in power

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Addressing the event, AL leader Amir Hossain Amu, also the coordinator and spokesperson for the alliance, said, "Sheikh Hasina did not come to power with the favour of anyone; she was voted to power by the people. Those who are afraid of being defeated in the polls are now conspiring to foil the election."

"The BNP cannot tolerate the progress of Bangladesh. That is why they have taken to the streets to stop the development trend. The Awami League must remain united. We will have to unitedly resist those who are dreaming of coming to power following an unconstitutional path."

Bangladesh Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon said the BNP is not preparing for the election, rather it has resorted to

"arson violence" like it did in 2013-14. The party is asking Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down, which is an unconstitutional demand.

He alleged that conspiracies are afoot at home and abroad to unseat Hasina.

Dilip Barua, general secretary of Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal, said BNP and Jamaat once again want to stop the development trend of the country by bringing in an unelected government.

AL presidium member Quamrul Islam said the election will be held in time no matter which party takes part in it or not.

Shirin Akhtar, general secretary of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, and AL Liberation War Affairs Secretary Mrinal Kanti Das also spoke at the programme, among others.

## ECONOMIC TROUBLES

# China a 'ticking time bomb': Biden

REUTERS, Salt Lake City



US President Joe Biden on Thursday called China a "ticking time bomb" because of its economic challenges and said the country was in trouble because of weak growth. "They have got some problems. That's not good because when bad folks have problems, they do bad things," Biden said at a

political fundraiser in Utah. Biden's remarks were reminiscent of comments he made at another fundraiser in June when he referred to President Xi Jinping as a "dictator." China called the remarks a provocation. Those comments came shortly after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken completed a visit to China aimed at stabilizing relations that Beijing described as being at their lowest point since formal ties were established in 1979. China's consumer sector fell into deflation and factory-gate prices extended declines in July. China may be entering an era of much slower economic growth with stagnated consumer prices and wages, contrasting with inflation elsewhere in the world. The United States has fought high inflation and seen a robust labor market. "China is in trouble," Biden said on Thursday.

## Key ingredients

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the market for personal gains.

He also added that egg and chicken prices would likely increase further in the coming days as many poultry farms across the country have been damaged due to the sudden floods owing to the rough monsoon weather.

"The poor will end up paying the price if the government doesn't initiate strict market monitoring policies immediately," said Sumon.

Md Foyez, owner of Madaripur Store at Karwan Bazar, said the price of turmeric, garlic, and ginger, among other spices, saw the highest price hike in one week.

Turmeric is now Tk 220-300 per kg, up from Tk 140-220 last week; garlic is now Tk 210-400 per kg, up from Tk 170-360 last week; and ginger is now Tk 200-200 per kg, up from Tk 160-180 last week, he said.

Sajeeb Sheikh, owner of Matri Bhandar, also in

Kawran Bazar, said onion prices have risen by Tk 6-10 per kg since last week due to an alleged supply crisis.

Indian onions sold for Tk 52-55 per kg (wholesale) yesterday, up from Tk 42-45 the previous week.

Meanwhile, the local variety of the bulb sold for Tk 70-80 per kg (wholesale) yesterday, up from Tk 64-72 the previous week.

Babul Mollah, the owner of Bikrampur Banijjaloy, the largest potato wholesaler in Kawran Bazar, said that there is no shortage of potatoes in cold storage across the country, but because of an artificial supply shortage, he was having to pay more for the most ubiquitous vegetable in the country.

Meanwhile, fish prices were found to have increased by Tk 20-100 per kg on average in three kitchen markets in the capital - Mirpur 2, Kawran Bazar, and Shewrapara.

Hilsa prices have risen the most, increasing by Tk 100-200 per kg since last week.



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