

ROW OVER SIKH LEADER KILLING

Canada shifts diplomats from India to Singapore, KL

NDTV ONLINE

Canada has moved out a majority of its diplomats working in India outside of New Delhi to either Kuala Lumpur or Singapore after it gave Ottawa an October 10 deadline to reduce its diplomatic staff to achieve parity in strength following a row over the killing of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, according to a media report yesterday.

The report in CTV News, a privately-owned Canadian television network, came after India earlier this week asked Canada to withdraw several dozen diplomats from its missions amid the escalating diplomatic row that erupted following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegation linking Indian agents to



the killing of Khalistani terrorist Nijjar in June.

India rejected the allegations as "absurd" and "motivated" and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case.

The Indian government has given Ottawa until October 10 to reduce Canadian diplomatic staff in that country to a level on par with the number of Indian diplomats in Canada, CTV News quoted sources as saying.

Earlier reports pegged the number of diplomats that would have to leave at 41, but the sources CTV News spoke with said the ask is specific to one of parity. "A majority of the Canadian diplomats working in India outside of New Delhi have been evacuated to either Kuala Lumpur or Singapore," the report said.

Global Affairs Canada, the department that manages the country's diplomatic and consular relations, had previously stated that "with some diplomats having received threats on various social media platforms," it was "assessing its staff complement in India."



Palestinians clash with Israeli forces during the funeral of 19-year-old Labib Damidi, who was shot dead by settlers in the occupied West Bank town of Huwara yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

INDIA FLASH FLOODS

Death toll rises to 40

Rescuers search for dozens missing; 2,400 people evacuated so far

REUTERS, New Delhi

At least 40 people were killed after a glacial lake burst its banks and triggered flash floods this week in the Indian Himalayas, government officials told Reuters yesterday as rescuers searched for dozens missing for a second day.

The Lhonak Lake in the mountainous northeastern state of Sikkim overflowed on Wednesday after a cloudburst triggered torrential rains and an apparent avalanche, causing major flooding in the Teesta river.

It is one of the worst disasters in the region in more than 50 years and the latest in a series of extreme weather events that have caused widespread damage in South Asia's Himalayas in recent years, blamed by scientists on climate change.

Authorities in Sikkim said the latest disaster, which came ahead of a popular festive and tourism season in the scenic state, had impacted the lives of

22,000 people.

"We got calls from people that river levels could rise at 3:00 am and we ran for our lives," said Javed Ahmed Ansari, 44, a resident of Teesta valley, who owns a river rafting business.

"We ran towards the hill in the jungle ... We saw houses getting swept away. I can now only see the first floor of our house which is filled with sand, everything is submerged."

Scientists and government authorities were working on an early warning system for glacial floods at Lhonak Lake which could have given people more time to evacuate if fully operational, officials involved in the project told Reuters.

Sikkim officials had put the death toll at 18 on Thursday evening. Officials in the neighbouring state of West Bengal said that emergency teams recovered another 22 bodies.

An estimated 75 people were still missing. "Water levels have

receded in some areas but north Sikkim has been totally cut off. Relief teams are unable to reach the affected areas there," Tseten Bhutia, a state official, told Reuters by telephone. Mobile and landline phone networks were not working in the area, he added.

About 2,400 people have been evacuated so far and 7,600 people were in relief camps, Bhutia said. Private and government institutions have been closed in the area until October 15.

Fifteen bridges had been washed away in the state, hampering rescue operations. All bridges downstream of an NHPC NHPC.NS hydropower station Teesta-V have either been submerged or washed away, the Indian government said.

Photos and videos on social media showed roads and pathways covered with silt and stones, vehicles stuck and small, muddy streams flowing by hillsides.

Spain rescues 262 migrants off Canary Islands

REUTERS, Madrid

Spanish coast guards rescued 262 migrants in three boats trying to reach the Canary Islands in the early hours of yesterday amid a surge in crossings, just as European leaders were meeting in Spain to look for ways to avoid a new migration crisis.

Italy and Spain have voiced concern over an increase in irregular immigration this year to their islands in the Mediterranean or in the Atlantic. Madrid has said it cannot cope with irregular immigration without help from the EU.

Emergency services said they had brought 103 of the 262 rescued migrants to El Hierro, the westernmost and tiniest of the Canary Islands.

Trump endorses Jordan for US House speaker

REUTERS, Washington

Donald Trump is endorsing Congressman Jim Jordan to replace ousted US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, the former president said yesterday, as the chamber's fractious Republicans try to unify in the aftermath of McCarthy's historic fall. "He (Jordan) is STRONG on Crime, Borders, our Military/Vets, & 2nd Amendment. Jim, his wife, Polly, & family are outstanding - He will be a GREAT Speaker of the House, & has my Complete & Total Endorsement!" Trump said in a post on his Truth Social app. The post follows earlier news that Trump, the frontrunner for the 2024 Republican nomination to challenge Democratic President Joe Biden, might agree to replace McCarthy for a short time. Fox News also reported that Trump was close to endorsing Jordan. Two Republican lawmakers are campaigning for the speakership: Representative Steve Scalise, who was second to McCarthy on the leadership ladder, and Jordan, an outspoken conservative from Ohio who has led investigations into the Biden administration. Republicans, who control the House of Representatives by a narrow 221-212 margin, are due to a closed door forum for candidates seeking the speakership on Tuesday, a meeting that the former Republican president said he could attend. A vote is expected the next day.

Drought caused global hydropower drop in early 2023

Says new research

AFP, Bangkok

Dry conditions, particularly in China, caused a "historic" global drop in hydropower generation in the first half of 2023, a new analysis shows, highlighting the effects of climate change. The research by renewable energy think tank Ember argues the drop is a "warning shot that hydro output could negatively affect the speed of the electricity transition". The group said global hydropower generation fell 8.5 percent in the year to June, more than any full-year decline over the last two decades. Three-quarters of that decline was the result of falls in China, which baked through record temperatures earlier this year. Between winter 2022 and spring 2023, most areas of southwest China experienced significantly less precipitation and higher temperatures than in a normal year, according to Beijing's ministry of emergency management. The fall in hydropower output meant global carbon emissions rose very slightly in the first half of 2023 worldwide. Lower growth in electricity demand helped keep the rise in emissions smaller than it might otherwise have been, Ember said.

US pre-polls

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be comprised of Karl F Inderfurth, former assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs; Bonnie Glick, former deputy USAID administrator; Maria Chin Abdullah, former member of the Malaysia House of Representatives; Jamil Jaffer, former associate counsel to the president; Manpreet Singh Anand, regional director for Asia-Pacific at National Democratic Institute; and Johanna Kao, IRI senior director, Asia-Pacific Division.

The primary role of the mission is to provide independent and impartial information on election preparation and the electoral context, US Embassy Spokesperson Bryan Schiller told reporters recently.

After the conclusion of its visit, the US mission will provide its key findings and practical recommendations ahead of the parliamentary polls due by January next year.

The delegation will also issue a public statement outlining the positive trends, as well as areas of concern and offering practical recommendations.

Pakistan seeks orderly departure of illegal Afghans

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan said yesterday that it would repatriate all illegal immigrants including hundreds of thousands of Afghan nationals in orderly phases rather than in one go.

Pakistan's announcement on Tuesday of a November 1 deadline for people to leave or face forcible expulsion has frayed already soured relations with Afghanistan's Taliban rulers, who said the threat to force out Afghan migrants was "unacceptable".

"It will be done in phases," the foreign office spokeswoman, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, told reporters in Islamabad. She added the process would follow an orderly manner, in contrast to what she called some misconceptions that all of them would just be expelled in one go.

Jailed Iranian rights activist

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which calls the protests Western-led subversion. But semi-official news agency Fars said Mohammadi had "received her prize from the Westerners" after making headlines "due to her acts against the national security."

Mohammadi is serving multiple sentences in Tehran's Evin Prison amounting to about 12 years imprisonment, according to the Front Line Defenders rights organisation.

Charges include spreading propaganda against the state.

She is the deputy head of the Defenders of Human Rights Center, a non-governmental organisation led by Shirin Ebadi, the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Mohammadi is the 19th woman to win the 122-year-old prize and the first one since Maria Ressa of the Philippines won the award in 2021 jointly with Russia's Dmitry Muratov.

"This Nobel Prize will embolden Narges' fight for human rights, but more importantly, this is in

fact a prize for the 'women, life and freedom' movement," Mohammadi's husband Taghi Rahmani told Reuters at his home in Paris, applauding as he watched the announcement on TV.

Mohammadi was quoted by the New York Times as saying she would never stop striving for democracy and equality, even if that meant staying in prison.

"I will continue to fight against the relentless discrimination, tyranny and gender-based oppression by the oppressive religious government until the liberation of women," the newspaper quoted her as saying in a statement.

Arrested more than a dozen times in her life, and held three times in Evin prison since 2012, Mohammadi has been unable to see her husband for 15 years and her children for seven.

Her prize, worth 11 million Swedish crowns, or around \$1 million, will be presented in Oslo on December 10, the anniversary of the death of Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel, who founded the awards in his 1895 will.

Torrential rain triggers

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Finally, when he found one, the rickshaw puller asked for an extra fare and agreed to go to Mohammadpur for Tk 150, he added.

Many like him also got drenched waiting for the bus in Kazipara, Senpara, and Farmgate areas around 9:30pm. Once the buses arrived, they were already packed with passengers who were soaking wet from the rain.

RAIN TO PERSIST

The BMD forecasts more rains across the country, including the capital, over a 72-hour period commencing at 9:00am yesterday, reports UNB.

"Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Dhaka, Mymensingh, and Sylhet divisions; at many places over Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions and at a

few places over Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions with moderately heavy to very heavy falls at places over the country," said the weather office bulletin.

The country's highest rainfall of 378mm was recorded in Mymensingh in the last 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday.

Meanwhile, a record rainfall of 476mm was witnessed in Kishoreganj's Nikli upazila in the last 24 hours till 6:00pm yesterday.

The highest temperature was recorded at 32.3 degrees Celsius in Bhola district, while the lowest temperature was recorded at 22.8 degrees Celsius in Panchagarh's Tetulia.

Day and night temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over the country, said the bulletin.

Meanwhile, monsoon is active over Bangladesh and strong over the North Bay.



Emergency and rescue personnel gather next to a bus crushed by a fallen tree in Colombo, Sri Lanka yesterday. At least five people died and several people were injured and taken to hospital after the tree fell on the bus.

PHOTO: AFP

Heavy rains leave parts

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also a senior journalist residing in the area, said yesterday.

He said his family was in nearly knee-deep water. "We managed to sleep on our beds, but we had to cook at others' houses."

Md Sujat, another Terokhadia resident, said knee-deep water was still on the road in front of his house.

Locals broke the boundary wall of an under-construction building to help water recede, he added.

"I couldn't sleep last night for fear of snakes and had only dry food," said Mukter Hossain, a motor mechanic.

He said his family of three had to depend on relatives for food.

As water was not receding, he and some others rented a machine to pump out water to a nearby drain.

Selim Reza Ronju, deputy chief conservancy officer of Rajshahi City Corporation, said they started pumping out water from some areas, including C&B Mor and Shipaipara.

"We will do the same in the other affected areas in phases," he added.

LIVES LOST IN GAZIPUR

An eight-year-old boy died on Thursday night, and a couple were killed early yesterday after mud walls, weakened by rain, collapsed on them in separate incidents in Gazipur.

The deceased are Faridul Islam, 8, of Konabari under Sadar upazila, and Imarat Hossain, 65, and his wife Achia Begum, 56, of Ratanpur Nalipara village in Kaliakair.

Konabari Police Station Duty Officer Arif Hossain said Faridul sustained injuries when a wall of their mud house collapsed due to heavy rain on Thursday night.

The child was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he died of his injuries.

Baten Hossain, a member of ward-8 of Mouchak Union Parishad, said the wall of the couple's mud house in Kaliakair collapsed and fell on them when rain and strong winds lashed the area. Other members of the family found them dead around 8:00am yesterday, he said.

Large parts of Gazipur city were submerged following incessant rain,

causing city dwellers to suffer in gridlock.

Traffic congestion was seen on Rajbari Road, Joydebpur Bazar Bus Stand, Kalapatri Road, West Joydebpur, and Joydebpur intersection till noon yesterday.

People's suffering was heightened due to the ongoing work of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project from Gazipur's Chandana intersection to Abdullahpur, as vehicles had to use one lane in some parts of the road.

Nadim Morol, a youth, said he left the capital's Mohakhali for his Joydebpur home around 5:00pm on Thursday afternoon, and it took him around seven hours to reach home, which is usually a one-hour trip.

Alamgir Hossain, deputy commissioner of police (south) of Gazipur Metropolitan Police's traffic department, said a part of Chandana intersection was submerged.

"We are trying to ease traffic hold-ups by removing broken-down vehicles from the road."

Our Gazipur, Mymensingh, and Rajshahi correspondents contributed to this report.