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Kamal made emeritus president of Gono Forum



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum council yesterday elected Dr Kamal Hossain as its emeritus president for life after he resigned from the post of party president.

One of the architects of the country's constitution, Kamal had been the Gono Forum president for 30 years since its founding in 1993, said party leaders.

A Gono Forum special council held at the Jatiya Press Club unanimously elected Mafizul Islam Khan

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Extraction of sand from the Meghna by some influential traders goes on unabated in Sawdagarkandi area of Narsigndi's Raipura upazila, putting seven villages in Chandpur union at risk of erosion. An entire village went into the river in 2020. The video was captured recently.

IMAGE: VIDEO GRAB

KHAWAJA TOWER FIRE 90pc internet data traffic to be restored by today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The internet service providers are hopeful that by today they will be able to restore almost all data traffic that got disrupted after the fire at Khawaja Tower on Thursday.

"We are now moving our racks and router switches to a nearby data centre in Mohakhali," said Md Emdadul Hoque, president of the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) yesterday.

According to ISPAB, 70 percent of broadband connection has been restored.

The blaze affected the operations of several international internet gateway (IIG) service providers, data centres and interconnection exchanges (ICXs) that were housed in the tower.

As a consequence, internet and voice connections across the country were severely hampered, with many users unable to access online services or make calls.

Mobile internet and voice connection disruptions were especially noticeable as these also draw bandwidth from the IIGs.

However, the damage is less severe than they thought, Hoque said.

Because of the Khawaja tower fire, two of the data centres - Dhakacol in the 10th floor and NRB Telecom on the 11th floor - were damaged.

Some equipment in NRB got burnt while Dhakacolo remained largely undamaged.

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STATE SECRET CASE Pakistan court declines bail to Imran Khan

REUTERS, Islamabad

A Pakistani court yesterday declined bail to detained former prime minister Imran Khan in a case in which he has been indicted on charges of leaking state secrets, his lawyer said.

The charge is related to a classified cable sent to Islamabad by Pakistan's ambassador in the United States last year, which Khan is accused of making public.

Former cricket star Khan denies that and said the contents of the cable appeared in the media from other sources.

Lawyer Naeem Panjutha said the Islamabad High Court declined Khan's application for bail and for the case to be dismissed. "We will challenge it," he said in a post on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Khan has been at the centre of months of political turmoil in nuclear armed Pakistan that has shone a spotlight on the powerful military's influence over civilian politics.

Khan was forced from office in 2022 after losing a no-confidence vote in parliament. He said at the time the military was trying to sideline him after he fell out with the generals over disagreements about top security appointments.

Khan has said the cable he has been accused of leaking was proof of a US conspiracy to push the military to oust him in the 2022 parliamentary vote because he had visited Moscow just before Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Both the United States and the Pakistani military denied that.



'Gaza is being strangled'

UN warns 'many more to die' from the blockage of the enclave as Israel 'stepping up' ground operations

AGENCIES

The UN yesterday warned that "many more will die" in Gaza from catastrophic shortages as Israeli air and ground forces stepped up operations in the Palestinian enclave.

And it raised the alarm over "war crimes" being committed as the deadly Israel-Hamas conflict raged into its 21st day as the army said its troops had mounted another brief land incursion into Gaza as it prepares for a ground offensive.

"In the last hours, we intensified the attacks in Gaza," Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, Israel's chief military spokesman, told a televised news briefing amid reports of heavy bombing of the besieged enclave.

He said the air force was conducting extensive strikes on tunnels and other infrastructure.

"In addition to the attacks carried out in the last few days, ground forces are expanding their operations tonight," he said.

Internet and mobile phone services were cut off in the Palestinian territory, a local telecoms firm and the Red Cross said.

Concern is growing about regional fallout from the conflict, with the United States warning Iran against escalation while striking facilities in Syria it says were used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard

Corps and others.

Israel has heavily bombarded Gaza since Hamas gunmen stormed across the border on October 7, killing 1,400 people, kidnapping over 220 others, according to Israeli officials.

The health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip says the strikes have now killed 7,326 people. Of them, more than 3,000 are children.

- ➔ 7,326 killed in Gaza in three weeks of conflict
- ➔ UN raises war crimes concerns
- ➔ Israel 'ground forces' conduct another night raid in Gaza
- ➔ Four Palestinians killed in West Bank raid

"People in Gaza are dying, they are not only dying from bombs and strikes, soon many more will die from the consequences of (the) siege," said Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN's agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA).

"Gaza is being strangled," he

added.

Israel has cut supplies of food, water and power to Gaza, notably blocking all deliveries of fuel saying it would be exploited by Hamas to manufacture weapons and explosives.

"Basic services are crumbling, medicine is running out, food and water are running out, the streets of Gaza have started overflowing with sewage," Lazzarini said of the overcrowded territory where 45 percent of housing is reported to have been damaged or destroyed.

In Geneva, the UN human rights office raised the alarm over war crimes committed by both parties.

"Nowhere is safe in Gaza. Compelling people to evacuate in these circumstances... and while under a complete siege raises serious concerns over forcible transfer, which is a war crime," she said of Israel's order for northern Gaza residents to flee south.

And a humanitarian catastrophe was unfolding for Gazans who were "being collectively punished" which "is a war crime," she said.

A first tranche of critically needed aid was allowed in at the weekend but since then only 74 trucks have crossed. Before the conflict, the UN says an average of 500 trucks were entering Gaza every day.

Mars has a layer of molten rock inside

REUTERS, Washington



Seismic waves generated by a meteorite impact on the other side of Mars from where Nasa's InSight lander sits have provided new clues about the Red Planet's deep interior, prompting scientists to reappraise the anatomy of Earth's planetary neighbour.

The new seismic data indicates the presence of a hitherto unknown layer of molten rock surrounding a liquid metallic core - the planet's innermost component - that is smaller and denser than previously estimated, researchers said on Wednesday.

Waves generated by quakes - including those caused by meteorite impacts - vary in speed and shape when journeying through different material inside a planet. Data from InSight's seismometer instrument has enabled the planet's internal structure to come into focus.

The meteorite impact that occurred in a Martian highland region called Tempe Terra on September 18, 2021, triggered a magnitude 4.2 quake and left a crater about 425 feet (130 metres) wide. It occurred on the opposite side of Mars from InSight's location in a plains region called Elysium Planitia.

"The importance of the far side impact was to produce seismic waves that traversed the deep interior of the planet, including the core. Previously, we had not observed any seismic waves that had transited the core. We had only seen reflections from the top of the core," said planetary scientist Amir Khan of ETH Zürich in Switzerland, lead author of one of two scientific papers on the new findings published in the journal Nature.

Rab arrests 'Arsa leader, aide' in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Rab claimed to have arrested the chief of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army's torture cell along with his cohort.

Osman alias Salman Murabbi, 50, is also the head of Arsa's ulama body and an accused in the killing of a Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) official, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's law and media wing, at a press conference in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Moin said that based on the information given by Salman after his arrest on Thursday night, a team of Rab-15 raided Kutupalong refugee camp-4 extension area in Ukhiya upazila and recovered four firearms, nine bullets, several sharp weapons, and torture equipment of Arsa's torture cell.

Another Arsa activist Md Yunus, 24, was arrested from the cell on a hill in Rajapalong union of the upazila, he said.

Moin said the arrestees were Myanmar nationals.

Salman entered Bangladesh illegally with his family in 2017 and started living in Block-D/4 of Refugee Camp-13 in Thaingkhali. He joined Arsa in 2018, the Rab official said.

He added that they used to torture Rohingyas and their members, who want to quit the group, by confining them to

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Palestinian nurses attend to a little girl with a head wound as she sits on an examining table at the Nasser hospital following an Israeli strike on Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. More than 7,000 Palestinians, including nearly 3,000 children, have been killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza since the war began on October 7.

PHOTO: AFP

The Maldives starts talks with India on troop removal

REUTERS, Colombo

The Maldives has started negotiations with India to remove its military presence, President-elect Mohamed Muizzu said in an interview published by Bloomberg News yesterday, as New Delhi and Beijing both vie for influence in the region.

Removing Indian troops was a key campaign pledge by Muizzu, who ousted president Ibrahim Solih last month.

Around 70 Indian military personnel maintain New Delhi-sponsored radar stations and surveillance aircraft. Indian warships help patrol Maldives' exclusive economic zone.

Muizzu said in the interview he had already begun negotiations with the Indian government on removing its military presence, calling those talks "very successful already."