

ANTI-ISRAEL RIOT

Russia blames ‘external interference’

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday blamed “external interference” for an anti-Israel riot that closed an airport in the Muslim-majority region of Dagestan the previous day.

“Yesterday’s events at Makhachkala airport are, to a large extent, the result of external interference,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Russian police yesterday said they arrested 60 people suspected of storming the airport, seeking to attack Jewish passengers coming from Israel.

Dozens of protesters broke through doors and barriers at Makhachkala airport on Sunday, with some charging onto runway.

“Against the backdrop of TV footage showing the horrors of what is happening in the Gaza Strip... it is very easy for enemies to take advantage of and provoke the situation,” Peskov said.

SOUTH LEBANON

Deadly strike on journos was ‘targeted’ Says RSF

AFP, Paris

A Reuters journalist killed in southern Lebanon two weeks ago and others wounded in the same incident were deliberately targeted, a Reporters Without Borders investigation released on Sunday said.

Video journalist Issam Abdallah died and six other journalists were wounded – including two from AFP – in strikes the village of Alma al-Shaab in southern Lebanon on October 13.

“The initial findings of the investigation show that the reporters were not collateral victims of the shooting,” the media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said.

“One of their vehicles, marked ‘press’, was targeted, and it was also clear that the group stationed next to it was journalists.”

The journalists believe they were hit by fire coming from the Israeli side of the border.

BNP writes to diplomats

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involved in the violence seen on Saturday and Sunday that led to “chaos and damage to public lives and properties”.

The BNP is now collecting video footage to analyse who was behind the attacks on Saturday’s rally, the leaders said.

The footage they have at present shows the police along with some unknown people attacked the BNP leaders and activists on the day of the rally, they claimed. They are trying to find out who they were and why they came to the rally as the entire Nayapaltan area was under the control of the police then.

In the letter, which had seven sub-sections, the BNP categorically denied any part in the violence that befell the commercial centre of Dhaka on Saturday.

To further its point, the BNP cited the peaceful and non-violent environment of its regional gatherings across Bangladesh since July last year and a grand rally in Dhaka before the one on Saturday.

“While we are edging closer to success in our peaceful campaign for the revival of democracy in Bangladesh, the ruling Awami League, fearing our collective power, has opted for a path of discord and clashes.”

The attacks were orchestrated by certain individuals from the Awami League government’s “heavily politicised law-enforcement agencies” and its party men, said the letter, which was seen by The Daily Star.

AL’s activists started “attacking the extension of a peaceful BNP rally near the Kakrail intersection” and threw bricks at a gate near the chief justice’s residence.

In so doing, they “tried to falsely legitimise police intervention”.

“In a situation where the police force needed to maintain a professional and impartial role, the police themselves initiated aggressive actions by chasing

and assaulting BNP activists who were heading to the rally in Paltan. Tear gas was fired, and sound grenades were deployed recklessly against unarmed and defenceless BNP party men.”

Many journalists and media workers, who are responsible for carrying out their professional duties, have not been spared, the letter said.

All the allegations of clashes and arson attacks occurred in locations far from the BNP’s primary grand rally venue in Nayapaltan, so there is no possibility of its central leaders or grassroots members being involved in the events in any way, the letter said.

“We view this as an integral part of Awami League’s three-pronged strategy: first, undermining the BNP’s peaceful and non-violent demonstrations with controversial clashes and confrontations; second, spreading widespread fear and intimidation among millions of opposition grassroots and followers through violent attacks; and third, ensnaring BNP leaders and key activists in fabricated, high risk cases in a vain effort to keep us away from the ongoing one-point demand movement,” the letter said.

The letter also condemned the police raids at the residences of top BNP leaders with the view to arresting them for the violence on Saturday.

Police arrested BNP Vice Chairman Abdul Awal Mintoo’s youngest son, Tajwar Awal, after not finding the former at their home. They also apprehended the younger brother of Ishraque Hossain, a member of BNP’s International Affairs Committee, and his driver after failing to find Ishraque, it said.

The letter says that Ishraque’s brother Ishfaq was tortured. “We condemn such brutalisation and harassment of the family members of BNP politicians, which is a blatant violation of human rights.”

Regardless, the BNP remains resolute in its movement to ensure a free, fair, and inclusive election under a neutral election-time government.

NORTH MYANMAR

Thousands of people feared displaced in new clashes

Says UN

AFP, YANGON

Thousands of people are feared to have been displaced by four days of fighting in northern Myanmar, including several hundred who reportedly fled to China, the United Nations said yesterday.

On Friday, three powerful ethnic armed organisations attacked junta troops across a swathe of northern Shan state, home to a planned billion-dollar rail link, part of Beijing’s Belt and Road infrastructure project.

The Ta’ang National Liberation Army, the Arakan Army and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army have since said they have seized several military posts and key roads.

The three groups have fought regularly with the military over autonomy and control of resources.

“As of 30 October, over 6,200 individuals have reportedly been newly displaced” by the fighting, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a statement.



A Palestinian casualty is assisted at the site of an Israeli strike on a house in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli troops and tanks attacked Gaza’s main northern city from both sides yesterday, three days after they began a major ground offensive in the Palestinian enclave.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israel hits military infrastructure in Syria

Concerns growing about regional fallout from Israel’s war on Hamas in Gaza

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel’s army said yesterday it carried out air strikes on military infrastructure inside Syria as fears grow that its war against Hamas could spur a broader regional conflict.

“A short time ago, an IDF fighter jet attacked the launchers” from where overnight attacks originated towards Israeli territory, the military said, indicating it hit “military infrastructure in Syrian territory”.

The army did not provide more details, but public broadcaster Kan News said the strikes hit near the southern city of Daraa.

Syria’s defence ministry said yesterday Israel struck at around 1:35 am (2235 GMT) “from the direction of the occupied Syrian Golan, targeting two positions of our armed forces in the Daraa countryside, causing some material losses”.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said Israel targeted “an artillery battalion” in Daraa province, in response to shelling on the nearby occupied Golan Heights.



The Britain-based Observatory, which has a vast network of sources in Syria, said Hezbollah-linked Syrian and Palestinian groups were behind rocket attacks from the Daraa area.

Concerns are growing about the regional fallout from Israel’s war on Gaza’s Hamas rulers.

Since the fighting began, there has been a string of attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria as well as increasing exchanges of fire along the Israel-Lebanon border between the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia and Israeli forces.

Late Sunday, the Israeli military

said it was striking “Hezbollah terrorist targets in Lebanon” in response to rocket fire.

Cross-border exchanges with Hezbollah have become an almost daily occurrence since October 7, when Hamas members stormed over the Gaza border into southern Israel, killing some 1,400 people, mostly civilians, and seizing nearly 240 hostages.

Since then, Israel has responded with an unrelenting bombardment of Gaza, which the Hamas-run health ministry says has killed more than 8,000 people, nearly half of them children.

S Africa calls for UN force to protect Gazans

REUTERS, Johannesburg

South Africa yesterday called for the United Nations to deploy a rapid protection force to protect civilians in the Palestinian enclave of Gaza from further bombardment.

South Africa has long been an advocate for peace in the region, likening the plight of Palestinians to its own under the apartheid regime that ended in 1994.

In calling for a protection force, South Africa has gone further in its support for the Palestinians than most nations, some of which have called for a ceasefire or the opening of a humanitarian corridor to allow aid into Gaza.

“Entire generations of families have been wiped out in Gaza over the last three weeks,” the foreign ministry said in a statement.

A member of the Palestinian community in Johannesburg had 25 family members killed in an Israeli air strike yesterday morning, the statement said.

QATAR DEATH ROW

India vows to free its ex-navy personnel

AFP, New Delhi

India’s foreign minister yesterday said the country would “make all efforts” to secure the release of eight ex-navy personnel sentenced to death by a court in Qatar, reportedly for spying for Israel.

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said he had met the families of the detained Indians and told them the government “attaches the highest importance” to their case. Indian media report the eight – among them former high-ranking and decorated officers, including captains who once commanded warships – were arrested in Doha in August 2022.

In a post on social media, Jaishankar said that he fully shared “the concerns and pain of the families”, and that the “government will continue to make all efforts to secure their release”. Qatar has not commented on the case and the charges have not been made public. India’s navy chief told reporters yesterday that “every effort” was being made by the government to “get relief for our personnel”.

The sentences were only revealed last week when India’s foreign ministry said it was “shocked” at the case. The eight men were employees of Al Dahra, a Gulf-based company that offers “complete support solutions” to the aerospace, security and defence sectors. The Hindu reported the men were spying for a “third country”, while Times of India has said that “various reports claimed they were accused of spying for Israel”.

Sonia condemns India skipping UN vote on Israel

NDTV ONLINE

The Congress is “strongly opposed” to India’s abstention on the recent UN resolution on the Israel-Hamas conflict, former party chief Sonia Gandhi said yesterday, asserting that while her party had unequivocally condemned Hamas’ attacks, the tragedy is compounded by the Israeli state now focused on exacting revenge from a population that is largely as helpless as it is blameless.


She also said her party’s longstanding position has been to support direct negotiations for a sovereign independent, viable and secure state of Palestine coexisting in peace with Israel.

In an article in The Hindu, Sonia said “humanity is on trial now”, as she called for the loudest and most powerful voices to be for a cessation of military activity. “We were collectively diminished by the brutal attacks on Israel. We are now all diminished by Israel’s disproportionate and equally brutal response. How many more lives will have to be taken before our collective conscience is stirred and awakened?” she said.

“The unprecedented attack was devastating for Israel. The Indian National Congress strongly believes that violence has no place in a decent world...condemned Hamas’s attacks,” she added.



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