

LEBANON BORDER

Two journos,
third person
killed in
Israeli strike

REUTERS, Beirut

Two journalists working for a Lebanon-based TV channel and a third person were killed by a rocket strike near Lebanon's border with Israel yesterday, the Lebanese state news agency reported.

The agency said the incident took place near the town of Tir Harfa, about a mile from the Israeli frontier.

Lebanon's Al Mayadeen TV, which the two killed reporters were working for, said Israel had carried out the attack and deliberately targeted the journalists.

Fighting between Israel and Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah broke out after Israel-Hamas war that broke out on October 7. The border violence has escalated, raising Western fears of a widening war in the Middle East that could draw in both US and Iran.

China's Xi
calls for peace
conference on
Gaza war

AFP, Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday called for an "international peace conference" to resolve the conflict between Israel and Hamas, as he addressed a virtual summit of fellow BRICS leaders.

"There can be no sustainable peace and security in the Middle East without a just solution to the question of Palestine," Xi said, speaking through an interpreter.

"China calls for an early convening of an international peace conference that is more authoritative to build international consensus for peace," he said. Such a conference would, Xi added, "work toward an early solution to question of Palestine that is comprehensive, just and sustainable".

"Since the outbreak of the latest Palestinian-Israeli conflict, China has been working actively to promote peace talks and a ceasefire," he said. Beijing, he said, "has provided humanitarian assistance to help ease the humanitarian plight in Gaza" and would continue to do so.

Pretoria is hosting the virtual meeting of BRICS aimed at drawing up a common response to the Israel-Hamas conflict.



Israeli soldiers transfer detained Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip yesterday, amid ongoing battles between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas.

PHOTO: AFP

Push Israel over Gaza
humanitarian aidUS Democrats urge Biden; Guterres says UN protectorate in
Gaza not a solution

AGENCIES

A group of US President Joe Biden's fellow Democrats urged him on Monday to encourage Israel to take immediate steps - including reopening a major border crossing - to help provide humanitarian aid for innocent civilians in Gaza.

"Eliminating the threat posed by Hamas and protecting civilians are not mutually exclusive aims. Indeed, International Humanitarian Law requires that civilians be protected during armed conflict," a group of Democratic senators wrote in a letter to Biden.

The letter was led by Senators Tammy Baldwin, Tim Kaine and Chris Van Hollen, and signed by at least eight other Senate Democrats. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The lawmakers sent the letter as Biden's administration said it was nearing a deal to free some of the 240 hostages taken by Hamas.

Since the Israeli offensive began on October 7, Gaza's government has said at least 13,300 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli bombardment. The United Nations says two thirds of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been made homeless.

The crisis has divided Congress, prompting to date only about three dozen Democratic members to back calls for a ceasefire, which



Israel rejects as something that let Hamas regroup, reports Reuters.

Monday's letter did not call for a ceasefire, but did note the dire humanitarian situation, including working toward the sustained delivery of water, food, fuel and other basic necessities, including by reopening the Kerem Shalom border crossing between Israel and Gaza, protection of civilians and civilian sites and ensuring civilians' access to medical attention.

"We are concerned that increased and prolonged suffering in Gaza is not only intolerable for Palestinian civilians there but will also negatively impact the security of Israeli civilians by exacerbating existing tensions and eroding regional alliances," the lawmakers wrote.

UN aid chief Martin Griffiths

last week implored Israel to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Monday that a UN protectorate in Gaza would not solve the conflict there, calling instead for a "transition period" involving Arab nations and the United States and leading to a two-state solution, reports AFP.

Guterres said it was "important to be able to transform this tragedy into an opportunity" - which, for him, meant moving "in a determined and irreversible way to a two-state solution."

This means, after the current war between Israel and Hamas fighters in Gaza ends, "a strengthened Palestinian Authority, assuming responsibilities in Gaza," he said.

Gaza's poor
sanitation
'perfect storm
for tragedy'

Unicef warns

AFP, Geneva

Fuel shortages and worsening sanitation in the Gaza Strip are shaping up to be the perfect storm for tragedy through the spread of disease, the United Nations warned yesterday.

Unicef, the UN children's agency, said there was a serious threat of a mass disease outbreak in the besieged Palestinian territory.

"Without enough fuel, we will see the collapse of sanitation services. So we have then, on top of the mortars and the bombs, a perfect storm for the spread of disease.

"It's a perfect storm for tragedy," Unicef spokesman James Elder told a press briefing in Geneva.

"We have a desperate lack of water, faecal matter strewn across densely populated settlements, an unacceptable lack of latrines, and severe, severe restraints on hand-washing, personal hygiene and cleaning."

Speaking via video-link from Cairo, Elder said the potential for wider loss of life in Gaza was being significantly exacerbated because an estimated 800,000 children in the enclave are displaced from their homes.

THE BAY OF BENGAL

Russia holds
joint naval
drills with India

AFP, Moscow

Russia said yesterday it was holding joint naval exercises with India in the Bay of Bengal, as the two countries bolster security ties despite Moscow's offensive in Ukraine. The United States has in the past voiced concern about India holding joint drills with Russia, which has been trying to expand its influence in the region. "The purpose of the exercise is to comprehensively develop and strengthen naval co-operation between Russia and India," Moscow's defence ministry said. The drills will help the two navies "jointly counter global threats and ensure the safety of civilian shipping in the Asia-Pacific region," Moscow added. They are planned to last until today and will involve ships from Russia's Pacific Fleet, including the Admiral Tributs anti-submarine destroyer, it said. India has economic and security interests in both Russia and the West and has tried to strike a careful balancing act between the two sides, despite the conflict. It has not joined Western countries in sanctioning Moscow over the offensive in Ukraine and has benefited from a steep discount in Russian oil supplies. Meanwhile, US and Philippine troops began joint maritime and air patrols off the Southeast Asian country yesterday, President Ferdinand Marcos said, as the countries seek to counter China's growing assertiveness in the region.

Russian strikes
kill three in east
Ukraine; 8 hurtEU officials voice support
in Kyiv

REUTERS, Kyiv

Three people were killed and eight were wounded in overnight Russian missile attacks and shelling in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk and Kharkiv regions, Ukrainian officials said yesterday. Missiles hit a hospital in the Donetsk town of Selydove and a coal mine, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said on the Telegram messaging service. "Two buildings of the hospital were damaged, six civilians were injured.

There may be victims under the rubble, search operations continue," Klymenko said. The Ukrainian prosecutors' office

later said one person was killed in the attack, presumably with S-300 missiles. Klymenko said one worker was killed in the attack on the coal mine. "Four buildings, 19 vehicles and a power line were damaged. 39 miners were trapped underground. As of now, all miners have been brought to the surface," he said. In Kharkiv, one person was killed in Russian shelling, the region's governor, Oleh Synchubov, said. Meanwhile, EU chief Charles Michel and Germany's defence minister arrived in Kyiv yesterday, becoming the latest officials to throw their weight behind Ukraine, making surprise visits on the 10th anniversary of the historic Maidan protests. The visits come in the wake of a disappointing Ukrainian counteroffensive in the south and east of the country that Kyiv launched this summer after building up stockpiles of Western weapons.

Bangladeshi activist makes it
to 'BBC 100 Women 2023'

FROM PAGE 1

surgeries, she survived. But she soon realised, as a female burn survivor, the world would become a difficult place for her.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, she said, "I was still in a life-threatening situation when a distant relative came to the hospital, saw me, and said to my family, 'What's the point of keeping her alive? You might as well poison her.' This is the reality that female burn survivors have to face."

After making a rare recovery, Ivy started piecing her life back together.

She completed her graduation from Eden College after registering for a private degree as she struggled to attend classes. A master's degree came soon after, followed by a job at Action on Disability and Development (ADD).

This is where her journey began as a rights activist, and it is also where

she found her calling.

Her organisation assisted her in getting a master's degree in Development Studies from Brac University. Ivy continued her education even further - first getting an LLB degree in 2010, and then a diploma in Social Compliance from Bangladesh Institute of Management (BIM) in 2012.

"I wanted to study law not because I wanted to become a practising lawyer but to understand the legal framework of disability rights. I studied in BIM to get an understanding of the representation of persons with disabilities in the labour market."

In 2014, she founded her own non-profit organisation - Voice & Views - "to raise the voices of women with disabilities caused by burns in the disability movement".

Since then, Voice & Views has strived to promote the dignity, inclusion, and empowerment of

women with disabilities in Bangladesh.

Her inclusion in BBC's list of 100 inspirational and influential women in 2023, however, not only came as recognition of her activism but also her filmmaking.

"Initially, I just wanted to understand films. I took some filmmaking courses and realised that in films, persons with disabilities are portrayed as inferior. Personally, I accept my disability. My life had changed in a moment, and since then, it's been a struggle. Through my films, I tried to talk about our rights and how we are portrayed."

Her first film, "Nirobe" was produced in 2012, and she has since been regarded by some as the first Bangladeshi with a disability to become a filmmaker.

About being included in BBC's 100 Women 2023, she said, "I'm so happy, I'm almost in tears. I've been in the disability rights sector

for many years now, and have seen burn survivors being neglected. I've gone through an identity crisis about my own disability. I've seen burn survivors face discrimination, especially the females who have to face questions that male survivors don't.

"My goal has been to share the stories of women with disabilities, especially burn survivors. I initially didn't have the platforms to tell these stories, so I learned filmmaking. Being able to represent women with disabilities in our country makes me happy.

"Burn survivors are discriminated against; they are blamed. People look at female burn survivors and wonder if they might be acid attack victims. And if they are acid attack victims, they are doubly victimised. [Through the BBC's recognition] I hope to create proper representation so people can get a positive message regarding such survivors."

'No rule of game' in collecting remittance

FROM PAGE 1

banks that are offering high dollar rates, said Md Abdul Jabbar, the MD and CEO of Janata Bank.

"But we are unable to do so because of complying with the Bafeda-ABB rates," he added.

During the first 17 days of the month, Mutual Trust Bank received \$20.98 million as remittance, City Bank received \$25.13 million and Prime Bank received only \$3.06 million. All three banks'

officials said the inflows were much lower than in previous months.

"There is no control in the forex market now," said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, the MD and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank.

Industry insiders blamed the central bank for the indiscipline in the forex market. That indiscipline has helped hundi, an illegal cross-border transaction, to flourish.

During August

and September, the Bangladesh Bank conducted inspections in some banks due to their alleged involvement in dollar rate manipulation.

In October, the BB treasury heads of ten banks due to imposing high dollar rates.

Those strict moves of the central bank contributed to constricting the inflow of remittance, according to bankers.

For instance, the remittance inflows rose

in October due to relaxed monitoring of the BB, as per industry insiders.

The Bafeda-ABB model of fixing the dollar rate has failed to cool down the forex market, said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

"A floating exchange rate is very essential for our forex market right now. If it is not possible then the central bank should introduce a managed floating exchange rate."

Pro-Raushan leaders voice worry

FROM PAGE 1

refused to make any comment on this issue.

Although the JP has been selling nomination forms since Monday, Chunnu said the party was undecided about running.

Yesterday, he said it was not possible to hold a 100 percent fair election under the current system.

"We have been demanding a fair and credible election. But a congenial environment

for such an election has not been created," he told reporters at the JP chairman's Banani office.

He said the party chief will make the final decision regarding running in the election.

Chunnu said there are questions in people's mind whether they will be able to cast ballots and that is why the JP is taking time to decide.

Asked about division between Quader and

Raushan, the JP secretary general said the party is united under the leadership of its chairman.

The opposition party sold 622 nomination forms yesterday, taking the figure to 1,179 in two days. The JP earned Tk 3.53 crore from the sale of nomination papers at Tk 30,000 each.

JP MPs Golam Kibria Tipu, Liaquat Hossain Khoka and Panir Uddin Ahmed, among others,

collected nomination forms yesterday, said party sources.

Raushan, the chief patron of the JP, is yet to buy a nomination form, said Joint Office Secretary Mahmudul Alam.

The sale of the party's nomination forms will end tomorrow. After interviewing the nomination seekers, the JP will announce the candidates on November 27.