

HIJAB LAW

Iran shuts bookshop for ‘violation’

AFP, Tehran

Iranian police on Friday closed a major bookshop in the centre of the capital Tehran for allowing unveiled women to enter the premises without a compulsory headscarf, a newspaper reported.

The closure is part of punitive measures by authorities over the past year against women and businesses who fail to observe the Islamic republic’s strict dress code.

“Today, at around noon (0830 GMT), police officers went to the central Tehran branch of Shahr-e-Ketab (book city in Farsi) and closed it,” reformist Sharh daily said on its website.

Sharh cited the reasons for the closure as “the non-observance of trade union regulations and the orders of the interior ministry” as well as “the presence of customers without veils”.

The bookshop confirmed its closure by authorities.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Russia bars pro-peace candidate

AFP, Moscow

Russia’s Central Electoral Commission yesterday rejected an application by a candidate calling for peace to stand in next year’s presidential elections.

The commission cited “mistakes in documents” submitted by Yekaterina Duntsova, a former journalist and city councillor campaigning “for peace and democratic processes”, Russian television reported.

The commission’s chief, Ella Pamfilova, said the members unanimously rejected Duntsova’s bid to stand in polls that President Vladimir Putin is expected to win comfortably.

Pamfilova told her: “You are a young woman, you have everything ahead of you.”

Duntsova, 40, had filed documents to stand in the March race as an independent candidate. She was required to provide documents proving that a group of at least 500 people had held a meeting backing her.

She wrote on social media that she would file an appeal against the ruling with the Supreme Court.



Residents of the refugee camp of Bureij arrive in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip following an evacuation order on Friday. PHOTO: STAR

RAID AT HOSPITAL

Israeli troops desecrated bodies, shot civilians

Say Palestinian doctor, nurses

CNN ONLINE, Jerusalem

Israeli soldiers raiding a hospital in northern Gaza desecrated the bodies of dead patients with bulldozers, let a military dog maul a man in a wheelchair, and shot multiple doctors even after vetting them for terror links, according to allegations by staff and patients.

The claims relate to an eight-day operation by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) at the Kamal Adwan Hospital last week, which IDF alleges was being used as a command and control centre by Hamas.

CNN spoke to two senior medical staff, another doctor and a patient at the hospital, who provided corroborating testimonies of what happened. CNN also reviewed video evidence for some of the claims.

They paint a disturbing picture of how the IDF carried out the operation, as doctors were interrogated for their connections to Hamas and staff struggled to treat patients trapped inside.

The IDF says that Hamas hides infrastructure in and around civilian institutions in Gaza, such as hospitals, and that targeting them is essential as it works to eliminate Hamas from the Gaza Strip. But its operations are contentious, with humanitarian organisations saying that medical facilities in Gaza are rendered unable to provide basic services.

Among the most serious allegations relating to the IDF’s operations at Kamal Adwan is that, as troops were leaving the hospital complex, they used bulldozers to dig up bodies that had recently been buried in makeshift graveyards in the hospital’s



courtyard.

“The soldiers dug up the graves this morning and dragged the bodies with bulldozers, then crushed the bodies with the bulldozers,” said the hospital’s head of pediatric services, Hossam Abu Safiya, in a phone interview yesterday. “I have never seen such a thing before.”

Videos and images he shared with CNN show decomposing human remains scattered across the hospital grounds.

The allegation was supported by the hospital’s head of nursing, Eid Sabbah, and another nurse, Asmaa Tanteesh.

“The bodies outside in the courtyard were plowed in front of our eyes,” Tanteesh told CNN. “All the while, we were shouting and screaming at them, but our screams fell on deaf ears.”

Satellite imagery taken on December 15 – right before the IDF withdrew from the hospital area – shows razed grounds outside the hospital complex.

The IDF did not address the allegations directly when approached for comment by CNN but acknowledged that it had carried out an operation at the hospital.

Earlier this week, the IDF released a video of the interrogation of the hospital’s director and published an accompanying statement saying he admitted it was being used for military purposes. It was unclear whether the statement was elicited under duress.

Abu Safiya, the pediatrics director, and Sabbah, the chief nurse, countered that the hospital only provided medical services and that the arrestees were civilians and medical workers.

CRIMES IN GAZA

Iran threatens Mediterranean closure

REUTERS

An Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander said the Mediterranean Sea could be closed if the United States and its allies continued to commit “crimes” in Gaza, Iranian media reported yesterday, without explaining how that would happen. Iran backs Hamas against Israel and it accuses the United States of backing what it calls Israeli crimes in Gaza, where weeks of bombardment have killed thousands of people and driven most of the population from their homes. “They shall soon await the closure of the Mediterranean Sea, (the Strait of) Gibraltar and other waterways,” Tasnim quoted Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Naqdi, coordinating commander of the Guards, as saying. Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthi group has over the past month attacked merchant vessels sailing through the Red Sea in retaliation for Israel’s assault on Gaza, leading some shipping companies to switch routes. The White House on Friday said Iran was “deeply involved” in planning operations against commercial vessels in the Red Sea. Iran has no direct access to the Mediterranean itself and it was not clear how the Guards could attempt to close it off, although Naqdi talked of “the birth of new powers of resistance and the closure of other waterways”. “Yesterday, the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz became a nightmare for them, and today they are trapped ... in the Red Sea,” Naqdi said.

VIOLENCE IN SUDAN

UN Security Council voices ‘alarm’

AFP, Washington

The UN Security Council expressed “alarm” at growing violence in war-torn Sudan on Friday, a day after it reported that seven million people have been displaced by the conflict. In a joint statement, the Council “strongly condemned” attacks on civilians and the spread of the conflict “into areas hosting large populations of internally displaced persons, refugees, and asylum seekers.” “The members of the Security Council expressed alarm at the spreading violence and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Sudan,” the statement said, reflecting the worsening situation in the country. In addition to the seven million internally displaced people, the UN said Thursday another 1.5 million had fled into neighboring countries. Since fighting broke out on April 15 between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his

former deputy, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, the city of Wad Madani, 180 kilometers (110 miles) south of Khartoum, had become a haven for thousands of displaced people during the conflict. But the Security Council said fighting had spread there too, causing refugees to flee once again.

“According to the International Organization for Migration, up to 300,000 people have fled Wad Madani in Al Jazira state in a new wave of large-scale displacement,” UN secretary-general’s spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Thursday.



Shishu Hospital overwhelmed

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respectively. In those months last year, the numbers were 320 and 308.

The data showed that till yesterday, 3,384 children were admitted to the hospital with the infection. The number was 3,103 in 2022.

“The number is increasing as children are most vulnerable to this disease,” Prof Dr Md Jahangir Alam, director of the hospital, told The Daily Star recently.

“There are some days still left in the month and I fear the number of inpatients may exceed 500 by the end of the year.”

An infection that inflames the air sacs in one or both lungs, pneumonia is the global leading cause of death among children under five as a single disease.

According to the icddr,b, approximately 2-3 children die every hour from pneumonia in the country. At least 24,000 die every year.

Just in the past 53 days, 92 children have died only at Dhaka Shishu hospital.

Around the world, pneumonia remains among the top five infectious diseases to kill children under five, accounting for 14 percent of 0.7 million deaths from infectious diseases, icddr,b data showed.

Physicians said air pollution is one of the main contributing factors behind cold-related diseases, especially pneumonia.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Prof Ilfat Ara Shamsad, child specialist and head of pediatrics at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said air pollution stands as one of the main causes as children’s respiratory systems are immature.

A WHO study showed that about one-third of pneumonia deaths are due to air pollution.

She added that children are mostly affected by virus and bacteria from the air. “Air pollution is linked to many respiratory complications, including asthma and pneumonia. Curbing it would surely reduce the number of children suffering from

such complications.”

Prof Jahangir said, “There aren’t many trees in Dhaka. As a result, when winter comes to this polluted city, children get sick easily.”

Along with elderly people, children are most affected from pneumonia and some other diseases like asthma, bronchiolitis, and even diarrhea, during the change of the season as their immune systems are weaker than other age groups, he explained.

Experts have advised parents to keep a lookout for symptoms – medium or high fever, cough, and laboured or fast breathing – and rush them to hospitals as soon as these signs are visible.

PATIENTS STUCK IN LONG LINES

Visiting Dhaka Shishu Hospital and Institute recently, this correspondent saw a large number of children and their parents waiting in line to see doctors at the outdoor department.

Eight-year-old Samia Sultana, who lives with her family in Adabor, was seen

waiting with her parents, while suffering from fever, cough and severe headache for at least four days.

Sultana Begum, a resident of Rampura area, spent over two hours in line with her eight-month-old baby.

“My girl has been suffering from fever and cough for the past three days. I cannot even breastfeed her due to the cough,” said the 35-year-old mother.

The scenes were grim at the Pneumonia Research Centre of the hospital as well, where all the 16 critical care seats occupied.

Jahangir said most of the patients of the hospital are from areas like Adabor and Mirpur. “The environment in those areas is poor due to immense pollution. We’ve also been getting patients from outside Dhaka.”

The doctor suggested taking up a balanced diet, enriched with vitamin D; wearing masks and comfortable warm clothes; and regular exercising to help prevent contracting cold-related diseases.

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Memo No. 45.02.0000.341.14.001.23-2610

Dated: 21/12/2023

e-Tender Notice (NCT, OTM)

HED Circle-1 Approval Reference No. 45.02.0000.051.14.001.23-8076

Dated: 12/12/2023

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following packages:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Document last selling date & time	Tender closing and opening date & time
1	927843	WP-14806/SDP-4 GOB-HED	08-Jan-2023 16:00	09-Jan-2023 11:30

These are online tenders where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the abovementioned Portal and no offline tender/hard copies will be accepted. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited on online through any registered bank's branch up to time specified in Online Notice Supplementary information with guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) and from the e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

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