

5 million at risk of starvation in Sudan: UN

AFP, United Nations

The United Nations appealed Friday for Sudan's battling factions to allow delivery of humanitarian relief to fend off looming "catastrophic" hunger.

Some five million Sudanese could face calamitous food insecurity in coming months as a nearly yearlong war between rival generals continues to tear the country apart, according to a UN document seen Friday by AFP.

It triggered a dire humanitarian crisis and acute food shortages, with the country teetering on the brink of famine.

UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths warned in a letter to the Security Council that "almost 5 million people could slip into catastrophic food insecurity in some parts of the country in the coming months."



India's Congress party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra gesture during Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra roadshow, in Mumbai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

HUSH MONEY Trump trial delayed till April

AFP, New York

The New York judge presiding over Donald Trump's trial for allegedly covering up hush money payments linked to extramarital affairs ordered a delay Friday in proceedings that had been scheduled to get underway on March 25.

"Trial on this matter is adjourned for 30 days from the date of this letter on consent of the People," Judge Juan Merchan said in a court filing that will push the trial to mid-April.

Team engaged to resolve crisis

FROM PAGE 1

After reaching near the Somali coast on Thursday the pirates changed location twice and now anchored the ship around 4 nautical miles off Somalia's Gadjabiran coast, sources said.

Officials of KSRM and Bangladesh Merchant Marine Officers' Association (BMMOA) said the pirates may have moved the ship from its previous location over security concerns.

They also said the pirates would take some more time to make contact.

Captain Anam Chowdhury, BMMOA president and veteran mariner, told The Daily Star that the pirates moved the ship very close to the shore to show everyone that they were in full control of the ship.

A senior official of KSRM said pirates made first contact after over two weeks during the hijack of the firm's other ship MV Jahan Moni in 2010.

Referring to several hijacking

incidents, Captain Anam said multiple groups of pirates are involved in the process of hijacking a ship and collecting ransom.

He said the group that would negotiate may now take some time to fix the ransom amount.

Rear Admiral (Retd) Md Khurshed Alam, secretary (Maritime Affairs Unit) of the Foreign Ministry, told The Daily Star that the pirates would now calculate the total expenditures to fix the ransom amount.

"The pirates hijacked the ship for money. It is their business. They would contact for ransom today or tomorrow," he said.

Saying that the ship's owner firm and insurer would play the main role in the negotiation, the secretary said the government is doing everything in support.

It took 100 days to rescue 26 Bangladeshis onboard the ship MV Jahan Moni which was hijacked by Somali pirates on December 5 2010.

Protests rage as asst proctor, classmate held

FROM PAGE 1

Abontika's mother filed the case with Kotwali Model Police Station in Cumilla.

Before Abontika's death, there was a post on her Facebook accusing Amman of sexual harassment and alleging that Din Islam verbally abused her and took Amman's side when she complained.

DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman said, "We are providing assistance to Cumilla police so that they [the accused] cannot flee or go into hiding. They will be handed over to Cumilla police, who will take necessary steps in this regard."

Earlier yesterday, the university suspended Din Islam amid protests by students on the campus and in Cumilla town.

JnU authorities on Friday night suspended Amman and formed a five-member probe committee headed by the president of the teachers' association.

Following the news of the death, hundreds of university students took to the campus and staged protests till midnight Friday, demanding justice.

Around 3:30pm yesterday, several hundred students rallied on the JnU campus, calling for exemplary punishment of those accused by Abontika.

JnU student Mujahidul Islam Bappy said, "Abontika's death is a systematic killing. The university administration failed to act on her complaint. The seed of her death was planted in the proctor's office. We demand a fair and just trial for this murder."

The protesters put forth six demands: a fair and just trial over Abontika's death; immediate arrest and punishment of the two accused; their expulsion; ending the culture of victim-blaming and ensuring the safety of Abontika's family; the university administration filing a case as the plaintiff; and strengthening the university's anti-harassment cell.

The students also issued an ultimatum, saying they would surround and blockade the vice-chancellor's office if their demands were not met within 24 hours.

A separate demonstration demanding justice for Abontika was held at Cumilla's Kandirpar's Pubali Chattar.

Locals and classmates of Abontika, a student of the 2017-18 academic session, said she sacrificed her life due to the harassment and lack of support from the university.

'MY DAUGHTER WAS BRILLIANT'
Abontika's mother Tahmina Begum

Ukrainian strikes rock Russia as vote cements Putin's grip

AFP, Moscow

Ukrainian bombardments killed two people and set an oil facility ablaze in Russia yesterday, the second day of showpiece elections guaranteed to cement President Vladimir Putin's hardline rule.

Presidential polls opened this week but voting has been marred by an uptick in fatal Ukrainian aerial attacks and a series of incursions into Russian territory by pro-Ukrainian sabotage groups.

Fresh bombardments prompted authorities to close schools and shopping centres in the Belgorod region bordering Ukraine, undermining the Kremlin's efforts to isolate Russians from its two-year conflict with Kyiv.

Putin, who cast his vote online, has vowed a harsh response to the assaults and accused Ukraine of trying to "disrupt" his bid for another six-year mandate.

lost consciousness when her body was taken home from CMCH yesterday.

She had earlier said, "My daughter was ambitious, brilliant, and achieved academic excellence. Yet, she did not receive justice when she complained about harassment."

After two namaz-e-janazas, Abontika was laid to rest beside her father's grave.

While talking to the media earlier yesterday, Din Islam denied the allegations, calling them "baseless" and saying that he did not assist Amman in any such incidents.

Abontika in November 2023 filed a written complaint with the proctor's office seeking a remedy for Amman's harassment.

Din Islam said he last spoke with Abontika and her parents two years ago, and he never talked to them since then. He does not know of any complaints.

He demanded a thorough investigation into the incident and said, "If I am found guilty, I am ready to accept it."

Besides, Amman in a Facebook post wrote, "I never had the mentality to disturb her. She blocked me on social media a long ago. And since then, I don't talk to her."

(Our Cumilla correspondent contributed to the story.)

INDIAN NATIONAL ELECTION

World's largest polls to begin in April

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Setting the stage for a marathon electoral battle spread across nearly two months, India's Election Commission announced today that the 18th Lok Sabha polls of the world's largest democracy, will be held in seven phases between April 19 and June 1, involving nearly 97 crore voters.

The results will be declared on June 4, 12 days before the term of the current 17th Lok Sabha expires on June 16, chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar told the media in New Delhi.

A total of 96.8 crore voters are eligible to

vote in the elections.

Most of the opinion polls have so far projected that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will return to power for a rare third successive tenure.

With the announcement of election dates, the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) intended to ensure orderly, transparent, and peaceful elections goes into effect.

Voting for the first phase of polls will be held on April 19 and will cover 102 Lok Sabha seats. The second phase of voting will be held on April 26 for 89 seats and the third phase on May 7 for 94 seats. The fourth phase of

voting will be on May 13 for 96 seats and the fifth phase on May 20 for 49 seats. The sixth and the seventh phases of voting will be held on May 25 and June 1 respectively for 57 seats each.

Polling will be held in seven phases in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. There will be five-phase elections in Maharashtra and Jammu and Kashmir and four-phase elections in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. Chhattisgarh and Assam will see three-phase polls while Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tripura and Manipur will see two-phase polls. 22 states will see one-phase polls.

HAITI VIOLENCE

Tensions rise as leadership remains in balance


REUTERS, Port-Au-Prince


Residents braced for another tense night in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince on Friday, as attacks continued across parts of the city in the aftermath of the resignation of Prime Minister Henry and in the absence of a clear plan to replace him. "Ariel Henry resigned but we are still in political distress," said resident Claude Atilus. "We must take our destiny into our own hands. I want the political players to rise to the task and commit themselves to organizing the country." A man walked through the city's Champ de Mars square carrying a white coffin over his head, while further out in the city's sprawling Delmas neighborhood, flaming tires and roadblocks lined the streets. "The situation is not good for us," said vendor Jean-Phillipe Jean-Louis, adding he was exhausted, prices were exorbitant and working on the streets was dangerous. "When we merchants go out into the streets looking for money to feed our children and wives, we find nothing," he said. The United Nations' children's fund has warned of record hunger and life-threatening malnutrition concentrated in the capital's poorest, most dangerous and busiest neighborhoods, with one in four children nationwide suffering chronic malnutrition, or stunting.

34 migrants missing off Tunisia, 2 dead

AFP, Tunis

Tunisian authorities rescued 34 migrants and found two dead bodies off the North African country's southeastern coast on Friday, said the National Guard in a statement. Another 34 people are believed to be missing, they added, after survivors told them that there were 70 on board before their vessel capsized. "We were able to intercept a crossing attempt of the maritime border, rescuing 34 passengers of different nationalities and recovering two bodies," read the statement. The National Guard said it was still searching for the missing passengers. Survivors told authorities they had set sail from "a neighbouring country" before their boat capsized. Tunisia and Libya are the main north African departure points for irregular migrants.





স্বাধীনতার স্বপ্নদ্রষ্টা,
বাংলার সত্য চিরবহমান
জন্মদিনের শ্রদ্ধা তোমায়
বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান