

PRO-PALESTINIAN
PROTESTPolice break
up demos
in Berlin,
Amsterdam

AFP, Amsterdam

Police yesterday broke up pro-Palestinian demonstrations at universities in Amsterdam and Berlin, which were inspired by similar demonstrations on campuses around the world.

At the University of Amsterdam, images on public broadcaster NOS showed police baton-charging protesters and smashing up tents at around 4:00 am (0200 GMT), after they refused to leave the campus.

"The demonstration took on a violent nature because later in the evening massive stones were removed from the ground," police said in a statement.

Police also cleared a pro-Palestinian demonstration at Berlin's Freie Universitaet, after up to 80 people set up a protest camp in a courtyard of the campus early yesterday.

The protesters, some of whom wore the keffiyeh scarf that has long been a symbol of the Palestinian cause, sat in front of tents and waved banners.

They later tried to enter rooms and lecture halls and occupy them, according to the university, which said it then called in the police to clear the protest.

Videos on social media showed some protesters being carried away by officers.

Meanwhile, a Monday deadline for pro-Palestinian protesters to leave an encampment at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in US cleared many demonstrators only to have the site retaken.

At the Rhode Island School of Design, another group of protesters began occupying a building in the ongoing protest movement connected to the Israel's offensive in Gaza.



Students occupy the street with tents in front of the Sciences Po University building in support of Palestinians in Gaza in Paris, France yesterday. Student protests over the offensive and academic ties with Israel have begun to spread across Europe but have remained much smaller in scale than those seen in the United States. PHOTO: REUTERS

More Palestinians will be
killed 'whatever they say'

Says EU's Borrell as Israel begins Rafah offensive

REUTERS, Brussels

Israel's offensive on Rafah will likely kill more civilians and is being carried out despite explicit warnings against it from European Union member states and the United States, the EU's top diplomat said yesterday.

"The Rafah offensive has started again, in spite of all the requests of the international community, the US, the European Union member states, everybody asking (Israeli Prime Minister) Netanyahu not to attack", Josep Borrell told journalists.

"I am afraid that this is going to cause again a lot of casualties, civilian casualties. Whatever they say", he said, adding: "There are no safe zones in Gaza."

China also urged Israel to "stop attacking Rafah". "War and violence cannot fundamentally solve the problem and cannot bring about true security," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said.

US President Joe Biden, seeking to push a Gaza ceasefire, on Monday warned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against invading Rafah. Jordanian King Abdullah II asked Biden in talks Monday to intervene to stop a "new massacre" in Rafah. In Israel, families of hostages being held in Gaza called on the US and other governments with citizens among the captives to pressure Israel to strike a deal with Hamas for their return.

Following indications Monday of progress in talks towards a truce in the seven-month war, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum said it had appealed to a number of countries to "exert your influence on the Israeli government" and push for an agreement.

"At this crucial moment, while a tangible opportunity for the release of the hostages is on the table, it is of the utmost importance that your government manifest its strong support for such an agreement," the group said in a message sent to the ambassadors of all countries.

Putin sworn
in for fifth
term

REUTERS, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin was sworn in for a new six-year term yesterday at a Kremlin ceremony that was boycotted by the US and other Western countries at which he said he was open to nuclear talks with West.

Putin, in power as president or prime minister since 1999, begins his new mandate more than two years after he sent thousands of troops into Ukraine, where Russian forces regained the initiative after a series of reversals and are seeking to advance further in east.

Xi criticises Nato
ahead of Serbia visit

AFP, Belgrade



Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday criticised Nato for its "flagrant" bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia in 1999, warning Beijing would "never allow such tragic history to repeat itself". Xi was writing in Serbian daily Politika ahead of arriving in the

Serbian capital Belgrade later yesterday, the next stop on his first visit to Europe since the Covid pandemic. His visit coincides with the 25th anniversary of the bombing by the military alliance, which was blamed on a CIA mapping error that left three dead. "Twenty-five years ago today, Nato flagrantly bombed the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia, killing three Chinese journalists," Xi wrote in Politika. "This we should never forget. The Chinese people cherish peace but we will never allow such tragic history to repeat itself." He also hailed the "iron-clad friendship" between China and Serbia, which he said was "forged with the blood of our compatriots".

India pulls most
troops from Maldives
before deadline

AFP, Malé

The Maldives has said India withdrew more than half of its troops deployed in its territory ahead of a Friday deadline, as the strategically located archipelago strengthens ties with China. The Maldives, known as a luxury tourist destination with its white sand beaches, also straddles key east-west international shipping routes. Pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu's election win last year hinged in large part on a pledge to reduce India's political clout in the atoll nation. After coming to office he vowed to disband a garrison of 89 Indian soldiers deployed to patrol the maritime boundary of the nation, made up of 1,192 tiny coral islands scattered around 800 kilometres (500 miles) across the equator. A spokeswoman for Muizzu told reporters in the capital Male that 51 Indian military personnel had left by Monday. "As of now, 51 soldiers stationed at two platforms have been repatriated," Heena Waleed said on Monday night.

1.5m displaced in Bangladesh in 2022

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2022, from \$128 billion to \$831 billion. By the end of 2022, the total number of migrants worldwide reached 281 million, with the displaced population hitting a record high of 117 million.

A high-level dialogue titled "Future of Migration and Bangladesh Perspective" was held later in the day. The discussion focused on ensuring that migration remains a positive force for human development and global prosperity.

Shofiqur Rahman Chowdhury, state minister for the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, emphasised the need for international collaboration to address the challenges of safe, orderly, and regular migration in an increasingly interconnected world.

Rear Admiral (ret) Md Khurshed Alam, the acting foreign secretary, highlighted the importance for Bangladesh to understand the evolving nature of migration and the factors that will shape its future.

Md Ruhul Amin, secretary for the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, acknowledged the role of migration as an enabler for socio-economic development while stressing the importance of ensuring migrant protection and welfare. He identified climate change, demographic shifts, urbanisation, and digitalisation as key factors shaping the future of migration.

IOM Director General Amy Pope spoke at the event, advocating for a strategic approach to migration informed by data and evidence, with a focus on a "whole of society"

perspective. She emphasised the report's role in shaping informed conversations about migration.

Participants discussed a proactive approach for policy advocacy, development programming, and international cooperation, considering multiple emerging issues affecting Bangladesh's development narrative as it is expected to graduate from least-developed country (LDC) status in 2026.

Later, a technical session was moderated by Ferdousi Shahriar, director general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Former foreign secretary Prof Shahidul Haque, Italian Ambassador to Bangladesh Antonio Alessandro, ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir, and Chairman of IPAG Prof Syed Munir Khasru also spoke at the event.

Speed limit set for all types

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Speeding and reckless driving are considered major reasons behind road crashes, but there had been no guideline for speed limits on highways and roads.

Different government agencies – which are constructing roads – are setting different speed limits for similar kinds of roads, confusing drivers.

The number of speedy vehicles – passenger and goods-laden ones – have increased manifold with the expansion of the country's road network and thus road crashes are frequent, reads the preamble of the guideline.

BRTA, under the Road Transport Act-2018 and its rules, issued the guideline to halve road deaths by 2030, which is a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

SPEED LIMIT

As per the guideline, the maximum speed for buses, minibuses, and cars, SUVs, minibuses, and other light vehicles would be 80kmph on expressways.

This limit for trucks, small trucks, and other goods-laden vehicles would be 50kmph and it would be 60kmph for bikes and 50kmph for articulated lorries, it reads.

Three-wheelers would not be allowed on expressways and national highways, the guideline mentions.

Cars, SUVs, minibuses, buses, minibuses, and other light vehicles can operate on the national highways (category A) at a maximum speed of 80kmph.

The limit would be 50kmph for trucks, bikes, and articulated lorries on such highways.

It would be 70kmph for cars, buses, and minibuses on the national

highways (category B), 50kmph for bikes, and 45kmph for trucks and articulated lorries on the highways.

The limit would be 60kmph for cars, buses, and minibuses on district roads while it would be 50kmph for bikes and 45km for trucks and articulated lorries.

The maximum speed limit would be 40kmph for cars, buses, and minibuses on streets inside city corporations, municipalities, and district towns, and 30kmph for trucks, motorcycles, and articulated lorries.

The guideline also determines speed limits for roads in upazilas and villages.

The local administrations will fix the speed limit near educational institutions, religious establishments, hospitals, markets, and residential areas. However, it would not be over 40kmph on national highways and 30kmph on regional highways.

This rule would not be applicable for vehicles providing emergency services like ambulances and fire engines, the guideline reads.

IMPLEMENTATION

The government banned operation of three-wheelers on 22 important highways in August 2015, but it could not be implemented fully.

Asked how the authority will implement the speed limit across the country, BRTA Chairman Nur said the implementing agencies of road projects will set up necessary signs containing the speed limit along the roads.

The law enforcers will take action against the violators, he said, adding that everyone, including drivers and road users, has the responsibility to implement it.

Tigers clinch
series in
Chattogram

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Raza's sliders sneaked through his defence, getting him bowled for six. Yet, all the discussion would be on the manner of Liton's dismissal as the right-hander dragged a delivery to his stumps to depart for a 15-ball 12.

Opener Tanzid Tamim was hitting the ball well but given his relative lack of experience in the international circuit, his 22-ball 21 would not be a big point of focus. Once he departed, with the score on 60 for three in the ninth over, Towhid Hridoy and Jaker Ali Anik did the repair job.

Jaker hit a 34 ball 44 while Hridoy struck a blazing 38 ball 57, carrying on his fine form this series as the duo contributed 87 for the fourth-wicket. Mahmudullah Riyad put the finishing touches for a score of 165.

Zimbabwe top-order fumbled again as Mohammad Saifuddin and Tanzim Sakib struck early blows. Leg-spinner Rishad Hossain then saw the back of Raza for just one, out caught behind. With Zimbabwe pegged back to 91 for eight, the game looked over but some late blows from Faraz Akram, who hit 34 off 19, saw the contest get tight.

Rishad and Saifuddin were hit for runs at the death end but the latter managed to defend 21 in the final over as Zimbabwe were restricted to 156 for nine, enabling Bangladesh to clinch series in Chattogram.

Indian foreign secy

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Mahmud and meet Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, said diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi.

Dhaka and Delhi are discussing two dates for Hasina's visit, one in June after the Indian national elections and the other in early July before she goes to China.

A diplomatic source in Delhi said India is keen on having Hasina over before her China trip.

India-Bangladesh relationship has been largely bilateral but the two countries are considering frameworks on regional and sub-regional cooperation, especially

on connectivity, power and water management.

A source said a few trilateral or multilateral issues remain to be solved.

There is an initiative for motor vehicle transport between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. It hit a road block as Bhutan objected to the initiative.

There is a hydropower cooperation deal between Bangladesh and Nepal but use of Indian land is necessary for it.

Teesta water sharing agreement could top Hasina's agenda during her visit, sources said.

Gaza 'choked off' from aid

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for them to evacuate, but with large areas of the coastal enclave already laid to waste, they say they have nowhere safe to go to.

As the ceasefire talks stumbled, mediator Qatar said its delegation would head to Cairo to resume indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas.

An official briefed on the talks said

the Israeli delegation had arrived in the Egyptian capital Cairo, though Israel has reiterated its objective remained the destruction of Hamas.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed to Israel and Hamas to spare no effort to get a truce deal and warned Israel that a full assault on Rafah would "be a strategic mistake, a political calamity, and a humanitarian nightmare."

Sounds of blasts

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However, he has no information if Rohingyas living in Rakhine state were trying to enter Bangladesh.

According to sources at the Border Guard Bangladesh, the border troops remain vigilant.

The Arakan Army seized a border guard headquarters in northern Maungdaw township on Friday, and its troops have entered the town, The Irrawaddy, a news website founded by Myanmar exiles living in Thailand, reported on Sunday.

Some junta troops fled to Bangladesh and the regime was launching repeated air and artillery strikes on Maungdaw, Buthidaung

and Pauktaw townships on Friday and Saturday, the news outlet said.

A total of 128 more Myanmar Border Guard Police members took refuge in Teknaf on Saturday and Sunday.

The conflict intensified from the beginning of February along the GhumdhumborderinNaikhongchhari upazila of Bandarban.

Kamal Hossain, chairman of the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar National Representative Committee (FDMN RC), said thousands of Rohingyas are fleeing their homes.

Some of them fled to Maungdaw downtown and many fled to areas along the Naf, Kamal said.

Four Chinese ships entered
'prohibited' waters: Taiwan

AFP, Taipei

Four Chinese coastguard ships briefly sailed through Taiwan's "prohibited" waters, Taipei said, urging Beijing to stop actions that "endanger" navigation safety.

China claims self-ruled democratic Taiwan as part of its territory, and has said it will not rule out using force to bring the island under Beijing's control.

The Chinese ships entered waters south of Taiwan's outlying island of Kinmen, five kilometres (three miles) from the Chinese city of Xiamen, around 3:30 pm (0730 GMT) on Monday, Taiwan's coastguard said in a statement later the same day.

The ships "sailed out of our prohibited and restricted waters" about an hour later, the agency said, urging Beijing to immediately stop "behaviour that endangers navigation safety".

Golden Monir

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In the judgment, the judge said Monir paid tax on the gold ornaments seized by Rab, the prosecutor said.

The judge also said Rab mentioned in the first information report (FIR) that the date of occurrence was November 21, 2020, by overwriting, but the four civilians, who are prosecution witnesses, mentioned in their statements during the trial that the date was November 20, 2020. So, the benefit of doubt would be in favour of the accused, the judge said.

Fifteen prosecution witnesses testified before the court.

Monir was arrested with arms, bullets, foreign liquor, and foreign currency, 7kg of gold ornaments, and Tk 1.9 crore cash at his home in the capital's Badda area, Rab said.

Later, Rab filed three cases against him under the arms, narcotics control, and special powers acts.

On February 5 this year, a Dhaka court acquitted Monir in the arms case, stating that the charges brought against him were not proven.

The trial of the drug case is pending with another Dhaka court.

More than 61pc

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conduct came days after police registered a case against leaders of BJP, including the president of its Karnataka state unit that had shared the post.

The animated video published last week accused opposition Congress leaders of planning to extend welfare benefits to the Muslim community at the cost of other disadvantaged tribal and Hindu caste groups.

Modi, seeking a third straight term, has made similar allegations in recent campaign speeches and said Congress would distribute the wealth of majority Hindus among Muslims, whom he referred to as "infiltrators" who have "more children".

Modi yesterday cast his ballot in the Gandhinagar constituency in his home state of Gujarat where his top aide and Home Minister Amit Shah is BJP candidate.

The BJP relies heavily on Modi's charisma with his image adorning everything from sacks of rice handed out to the poor to large posters in cities and towns.

But some voters said it was not enough. "Yes, the government gives us free rice, but what's the point? Look at the cost of potatoes and onions. It was never so high before," said 50-year old Rina Kathar from Baligate in the northeastern state of Assam, which also voted yesterday.