

S KOREA PRESIDENT 2nd martial law impeachment vote on knife edge

AFP, Seoul

South Korea's opposition leader yesterday urged ruling party lawmakers to side with the "people" and impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his failed martial law bid, a day before a second parliamentary vote that appears on a knife edge.

A week after a first attempt to remove Yoon for the martial law debacle foundered, the country's National Assembly will vote today around 4:00 pm (0700 GMT) on whether to impeach the president for "insurrectionary acts undermining the constitutional order".

Two hundred votes are needed for the measure to pass, meaning opposition lawmakers must convince eight ruling People Power Party (PPP) colleagues to defect.

As of yesterday noon, seven ruling party lawmakers had pledged to support impeachment -- leaving the vote up in the air.

Yesterday, the leader of the Democratic Party, Lee Jae-myung, implored them to support the president's removal from office.

"What the lawmakers must protect is neither Yoon nor the ruling People Power Party but the lives of the people wailing out in the freezing streets," Lee said. "Please join in supporting the impeachment vote tomorrow. History will remember and record your choice."

Two ruling party lawmakers supported the motion last week.

Lawmaker Kim Min-seok said yesterday he was "99 percent" sure the impeachment will pass.

Should it be approved, Yoon will be suspended from office while South Korea's Constitutional Court deliberates.

Prime Minister Han Duck-soo will step in as the interim president during that time.



PHOTO: AFP

People wave independence-era Syrian flags as they gather at Saadallah al-Jabiri Square after the Friday noon prayer in Aleppo, Syria yesterday, to celebrate the ousting of president Bashar al-Assad and the end of five decades of Baathist rule in the country.

Syrian Shias flee to Lebanon

They fear persecution despite promises of protection by HTS

REUTERS, Beirut

Tens of thousands of Syrians, mostly Shia Muslims, have fled to Lebanon since Sunni Muslim groups toppled Bashar al-Assad, fearing persecution despite assurances from the new rulers in Damascus that they will be safe, a Lebanese official said.

At the border with Lebanon, where thousands of people were trying to leave Syria on Thursday, a dozen Shia Muslims interviewed by Reuters described threats made against them, sometimes in person but mostly on social media.

Their accounts reflect fears of

persecution despite promises of protection by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) -- the Sunni group which has emerged as the dominant force in the new Syria but is far from being the only armed faction on the ground.

Shia communities have often been on the frontline of Syria's 13-year civil war, which took on sectarian dimensions as Assad, from the minority Alawite faith, mobilised regional Shia allies, including Lebanon's Hezbollah, to help fight Sunni rebels.

The senior Lebanese security official said more than 100,000 people, largely

members of minority faiths, had crossed into Lebanon since Sunday, but could not give an exact number because most of them had used illegal crossings along the porous border.

At the main border crossing between Syria and Lebanon, Samira Baba said she had been waiting for three days to enter Lebanon with her children.

"We don't know who sent these threats, on WhatsApp and Facebook," she said. "The rebels in charge haven't openly threatened us, so it could be other factions, or individuals. We just don't know. But we know it's time to leave," she said.

Pneumonia cases shoot up

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especially pneumonia.

Prof Mahbubul Hoque, director of Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute, said the hospital has been receiving an increasing number of child patients infected with cold-related viral diseases every day.

"Children under the age of five are particularly vulnerable to these illnesses," he explained, adding that cold weather combined with polluted air was also leading to a rise in allergy-related problems.

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

In the first 11 days of this month, 74 children with pneumonia were admitted to the 681-bed hospital. The number of such patients was 227 last month. In October and September, some 292 and 378 children were hospitalised respectively, according to the hospital data.

Until Thursday, 4,118 children were admitted to the hospital with pneumonia this year. The number was 3,511 last year and 3,103 in 2022.

So far, 19 people have died of cold-related diseases and 85,469 others have taken treatment between November 15 and December 8 across the country, according to the Management Information System of Directorate General of Health Services.

Nabila Akand, assistant professor of Shishu Hospital, said air pollution is one of the main causes of pneumonia. Children's respiratory systems are less developed than other age groups. Children are

mostly affected by viruses and bacteria from the air.

"Air pollution is linked to many respiratory complications, including asthma and pneumonia. Curbing it would reduce the number of children suffering from such complications," she told this newspaper.

In another incident, six-year-old Bibi Fatema has been undergoing treatment in the pneumonia ward for 29 days. Her mother, Maymuna Akter, shared, "My daughter has never experienced such severe breathing issues before. In winter, she would usually catch a cold, but this time, her condition has worsened significantly."

She said there are many shoe and garment factories in their area of Narsingdi's Madhabdi, adding, "The doctors said this might be the reason behind my daughter's acute breathing difficulties."

Prof Mahbubul estimated that the number of pneumonia patients at Shishu Hospital increased by 10 percent compared to normal times.

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.

According to the icddr,b, approximately 2.3 children die every hour from pneumonia in the country. At least 24,000 die every year.

On Thursday, a large number of children and their parents were waiting in lines to see doctors at the outdoor department of

the Shishu Hospital.

Talking to this correspondent, Sultana Akhter, a resident of Rampura area, who had been in a line for over two hours with her nine-month-old baby, said, "My girl has been suffering from fever and cough for the past three days. I cannot even breastfeed her due to cough."

The scenes were grim at the Pneumonia Research Centre of the hospital as all 16 critical care beds were occupied.

SYMPTOMS, PRECAUTIONS

Physicians advised guardians 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.

They suggested taking up a balanced diet, enriched in vitamin D; wearing masks and comfortable warm clothes; and exercising regularly to help prevent contracting cold-related diseases.

Dr Nabila urged guardians to protect children from exposure to cold and polluted air. "If necessary, children should wear masks and receive extra care."

"The level of air pollution is currently very high. During winter, humidity decreases, dust level rises, and construction activities further deteriorate air quality."

She said for those with allergies, this situation worsens as sneezing and other allergic reactions increase. Along with the dust, the spread of viruses also intensifies, resulting in a rise in patient numbers.

The poet of love

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cherished poet, Helal Hafiz, who breathed his last at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) around 2:30pm yesterday.

The poet, known as the poet of rebellion and love, was 76. Also a journalist, Helal Hafiz had long been suffering from glaucoma, diabetes, and kidney problems.

Jatiya Press Club General Secretary Ayub Bhuiyan confirmed the news saying that the poet suffered a fatal injury following a fall in the bathroom of Super Home Hostel in Shahbagh, Dhaka. The poet was taken to BSMMU, where he was pronounced dead, he added.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus expressed profound shock at his death.

In a condolence message, Prof Yunus said the death of Helal Hafiz is an irreparable loss to the Bangla language and literature.

He sought eternal peace of the departed soul and expressed deep sympathy to the bereaved family members.

The chief adviser said Helal Hafiz was the power of youth and a brave voice against dictatorship.

"Like his timeless poems, he will be remembered forever in the hearts of people," Prof Yunus added.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki expressed deep shock and sorrow and conveyed profound sympathy to the bereaved family.

He said Helal Hafiz has made his place among the notable poets of Bangla language with only a few poems. The nation will always remember his contributions.

Helal Hafiz's first nazam-e-janaza will be held at Bangla Academy at 11:00am today, according to cultural affairs ministry.

He will be laid the eternal rest at Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur after his second nazam-e-janaza after Zohr prayers at the Jatiya Press Club.

Born on October 7, 1948, in Netrokona, he finished his secondary education from Netrokona College. He eventually moved to the capital and finished his degree from Dhaka University where he studied Bangla literature.

Author of many notable works of poetry, Helal Hafiz published three poetry collections in his lifetime.

His debut poetry collection, published in 1986, earned him the "bestseller" title at the Ekushey Boi Mela that year, outshining several well-established authors of the time. It created a massive stir upon its release with its blend of political language and emotion, bringing him immense fame.

Since then, the poet had become a well-loved name among poetry enthusiasts as well as literates.

The book has been reprinted over 33 times legally since its publication.

His poetry encapsulates themes of love, grief, struggle, and movements that transcend time and age, and readers will continue to find them resonant no matter the prevalent socio-political climate.

Although Helal Hafiz hardly associated himself with decisive political viewpoints, his poem "Nishiddho Shampadokiyo" became one of his most quoted poems during egalitarian movements.

The first two lines of this poem -- "Ekhon joubon jar, michhile jubar tar shreshtho shomoy; Ekhon joubon jar, juddhe jubar tar shreshtho shomoy" ("Those in their youth, now is the best time to march in the protests; Those in their youth, now is the best time to march into battle") -- became political slogans.

To this day, it remains one of the most widely used political slogan in Bangladesh.

In an interview, Helal Hafiz himself once mentioned that no newspaper dared to publish the poem at the time. However, the first two lines of the poem were inscribed on the walls of Dhaka University one night in 1969 by Ahmad Sofa and poet Humayun Kabir.

Following this, Helal Hafiz achieved star-like fame as a poet during his student years.

Besides writing poetry, he also served as the literary editor of several newspapers and was a member of Jatiya Press Club. Helal Hafiz received the Bangla Academy award for poetry in 2014.

His most recent work, Bedonake Bolechhi Kedo Na, was published in 2019.

US following

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across the country have been holding protest march -- one outside the White House over the weekend. They're protesting against the continued killings of Hindus and [attacks on] temples in Bangladesh after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government."

Jha then asked Kirby, "Is the president aware about it? Did he raise this issue when he met his friend and the interim government chief Muhammad Yunus on the sidelines of the UN?"

"We have been very clear in our engagement with all Bangladeshi leaders that protection of religious and ethnic minorities ... security to all Bangladeshis regardless of religion or ethnicity. We want to hold them to that," Kirby concluded, in his response to Jha's question. Indian Americans have also demonstrated in several

American cities, including Chicago, New York, Detroit, Houston and Atlanta, protesting against alleged persecution and brutalities of Hindus in Bangladesh and urging President Biden to help stop it.

Earlier in the day, Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi urged members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to address the issue of violence against minorities, primarily Hindus, in Bangladesh during the confirmation hearing of Senator Marco Rubio for the position of secretary of state.

"As targeted violence against Hindus and other minorities continues amid the disorder in Bangladesh, I urge the members of the committee to address this crisis directly during the upcoming hearings to confirm Senator Rubio as the next US secretary of state," Krishnamoorthi said.

Withdraw

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your opponents."

He said the students, the people, and political parties, including the BNP, have all entrusted the interim government with the responsibility to create an environment in which a fair election can be held and a people's government and parliament can be established.

Earlier, on Wednesday,

Information and Broadcasting Adviser Nahid Islam reportedly said political parties are prioritising the election over reforms.

During a meeting at the Secretariat with a delegation from British Global Partners Governance (GPG), the adviser also mentioned that political parties are attempting to make the interim government fail.

'Prepare to remain'

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In a separate development, the United Nations humanitarian agency said Thursday that more than a million people, mostly women and children, had been newly displaced in Syria since rebels launched an offensive ousting president Assad.

"As of 12 December, 1.1 million people have been newly displaced across the country since the start of the escalation of hostilities on 27 November. The majority are women and children," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement.

Anti-noise pollution rules

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awareness programme on sound pollution control in Gulshan.

She said noise pollution has adverse impacts on physical and mental health urging cooperation from all to tackle the issue.

The environment adviser said, "Horn should only be used when a car is in motion.

"Reducing the speed of vehicles will also help cut the risk of accidents."

Special initiatives will be taken to combat noise pollution in 10 areas of Dhaka, she said.

"All should be aware of sound pollution to make a Dhaka liveable city," she added.

RAJUK Chairman Maj Gen (retd) Md Siddikur

Rahman Sarkar, Dhaka North City Corporation Administrator Md. Mahmudul Hasan, Sound Pollution Control Project Director Syeda Masuma Khanam, were present, among others.

Later, Rizwana visited Gulshan Lake and suggested setting up a sewage treatment plant there.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Jail Super Bhola District Jail, Bhola.

Memo No. 58.04.7200.100.04.021.24.3940

Date : 12.12.2024

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the national e-GP portal:

Sl No	Tender ID No.	Tender/Proposal Package Name	Publishing and Closing Date & Time
01.	1049944	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-1 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 11:40
02.	1049945	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-2 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 11:50
03.	1049946	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-3 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 12:00
04.	1049947	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-4 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 12:10
05.	1049948	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-5 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 12:20
06.	1049950	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-6 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 12:30
07.	1049951	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-7 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 12:40
08.	1049952	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-8 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 12:50
09.	1049953	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-9 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 13:00
10.	1049954	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-10 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 13:10
11.	1049955	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-11 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 13:20
12.	1049956	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-12 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 13:30
13.	1049957	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-13 for the Period of 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 29 December 2024 Time 13:40
14.	1049958	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-6 for the Period of 01 July 2024 to 31 December 2024	Publishing : 12 December 2024 Time 15:00 Closing : 12 December 2024 Time 13:50

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[Signature]
Shawkat Hossain Mia
Jail Super
Bhola District Jail

GD-1184

Israeli strike kills 33 Palestinians

FROM PAGE 12

October 7, 2023.

Separately, the Israeli military on Thursday ordered residents of several districts in the heart of Gaza City to evacuate, saying it would respond to rockets fired from those areas. At nightfall

on Thursday, dozens of families streamed out of the areas heading toward the centre of the city.

Months of ceasefire efforts by Arab mediators, Egypt and Qatar, backed by the United States, have failed to conclude a deal between the two warring

sides.

US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in Tel Aviv on Thursday he believed a deal on a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release may be close as Israel had signalled it was ready and there were signs of movement from Hamas.