

# Malaysia detains 196 Rohingya migrants

## Doubles patrols to find migrant boats

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's coastguard said yesterday it was doubling patrols in its waters to locate boats carrying undocumented Myanmar migrants, after almost 200 were detained on an island in the northwestern Malaysian state of Kedah.

The coastguard said police had detained 196 undocumented Myanmar migrants in the early hours of yesterday after their boat came ashore on a beach on the resort island of Langkawi.

"Based on information the coastguard received, there are two more boats carrying undocumented Myanmar migrants at sea but their exact location is still unknown," the coastguard said in a statement.

Malaysian coastguard director-



general Mohd Rosli Abdullah said authorities were patrolling the northern waters off Langkawi and border areas, and had arranged for air surveillance to be conducted to locate the boats.

The coastguard is also in contact with Thai authorities to identify the movement of the boats carrying the migrants, Mohd Rosli said.

Earlier yesterday, local English daily The Star reported about 200 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar had come ashore on Langkawi. The Rohingyas are a mainly Muslim minority in majority Buddhist Myanmar.

The coastguard did not specify in its statement whether the migrants were Rohingyas.

Around one million Rohingyas have fled, mostly to neighbouring Bangladesh, to escape a Myanmar military offensive launched in August 2017, a campaign that UN investigators have described as a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.

Myanmar's military rulers deny the allegations.

Malaysia, which does not recognise refugee status, has long been a favoured destination for ethnic Rohingyas fleeing persecution in Myanmar or the refugee camps in Bangladesh.



Anti-Yoon protesters march towards impeached South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol's official residence, after investigators were unable to execute an arrest warrant for Yoon in Seoul, South Korea yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## SOUTH KOREA POLITICAL CRISIS

# Investigators halt attempt to arrest president

### Some 200 presidential guards, troops clash with investigators

AFP, Seoul

South Korean investigators yesterday abandoned their attempt to arrest impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol at his residence over a failed martial law bid, citing safety concerns after a standoff with his security team.

Yoon, who has already been suspended from duty by lawmakers, must become the first sitting president in South Korean history to be arrested if the warrant is carried out.

The president, who issued a bungled declaration on December 3 that shook the vibrant East Asian democracy and briefly lurched it back to the dark days of military rule, faces imprisonment or, at worst, the death penalty.

"Regarding the execution of the arrest warrant today, it was determined that the execution was effectively impossible due to the ongoing standoff," the Corruption Investigation Office (CIO), probing Yoon

over his martial law decree, said in a statement.

"Concern for the safety of personnel on-site led to the decision to halt" the arrest attempt, the statement said of the confrontation with Yoon's presidential security service and its military unit.

Around 20 investigators and 80 police officers were heavily outnumbered by around 200 soldiers and security personnel linking arms to block their way after entering the presidential compound, a CIO official told a briefing.

"I understand there were minor and major physical altercations," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, adding that buses and cars were also parked to block their way.

Negotiations between the two sides ultimately faltered and the investigators decided to leave for their team's safety, although another execution of the warrant could take place after a review, the official said.

The deadline for the warrant is Monday, leaving it in limbo with just a few days remaining and Yoon defiant, vowing this week to "fight" authorities trying to question him.

Yoon's security service -- which still protects him as the country's sitting head of state -- has previously blocked attempted police raids of the presidential office.

The president himself has ignored three rounds of summons from investigators, prompting them to seek the warrant.

Yoon's legal team -- who raced to the residence and whom AFP saw were allowed inside -- said police had no right to execute the warrant at a "first-class military secret protection facility".

"We express deep regret regarding today's unlawful and invalid execution of arrest and search warrants," the president's lawyer Yoon Kab-keun said in a statement.

Dozens of police buses and thousands of uniformed police had lined the street outside the compound in central Seoul to prevent clashes after rival camps faced off there on Thursday, Yonhap news agency reported.



## Hopes of 'better future' expose bitter truths

FROM PAGE 12

(BAF) took his lamentations seriously as, in response, the federation's general secretary Kazi Razibuddin Ahmed Chapal said Ruman has mental issues and that he will "take him to a good psychiatrist".

Fast-forward to January 2025, Ruman is no longer in Bangladesh. He is in the USA with his wife Diya Siddique, the country's leading women archer. The pair is seeking that "better future" overseas which their motherland could not provide.

"We left the country for the USA on December 29, hoping for a better future," Ruman told The Daily Star over the phone from New Jersey on Thursday, further informing that they travelled on five-year visas obtained in 2021.

Ruman and Diya both are Olympians, together they won a silver medal in the Archery World Cup in 2021 -- the country's best-ever achievement at that level -- and have won numerous medals for Bangladesh across different international meets.

While Ruman's stocks had dropped recently with his performances being on a downward curve, Diya's was

on the rise and the 20-year-old had a lot more to give to archery. But now, it seems Diya would remain another 'what if' case in Bangladesh's sporting history.

Ruman and Diya's departure was not an isolated incident by any means. In October last year, Hakim Ahmed Rubel, the leading men's archer in the national side in Ruman's absence, quit archery and flew to New York, without even informing the federation. There, Rubel joined Ashim Kumar, another former archer who left the sport and is now making a living driving cars for ride-sharing services.

Athletes quitting and moving overseas is not something that just happens in archery nor is it a new occurrence as it has been happening for decades.

Some left quietly, like the archers, while some have disappeared from a touring contingent during international meets, like runner Tawhidul Islam did in the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia, bringing great shame to the country.

Now, saying there is no financial security for sportspersons in

Bangladesh, is not entirely true. The leading men's cricketers and footballers rake in big bucks and even mid-level players earn a respectable living. The women cricketers and footballers earn significantly less than their male counterparts but compared to other disciplines, they are better off.

Archery as a discipline has been on the rise in Bangladesh for a few years. So, when the biggest stars of that discipline determine it is better to quit and start afresh abroad, it makes one question the country's sports landscape.

A few weeks back, the country's sports fans were celebrating the news that very soon Hamza Choudhury, an English Premier League footballer, will play for Bangladesh.

All due respect to Hamza, he was never singled out as a global breakout star like Ruman, who was named the world's breakthrough archer in 2019 by the World Archery Federation.

But the jubilation of Hamza's arrival will drown out faint sighs of regret of losing Ruman and Co. And possibly in a few years, the sports fraternity would start wondering, why did our archery fall off?

## 4 lives lost

FROM PAGE 12

unidentified vehicle in the Hasara area of Srinagar upazila due to poor visibility caused by dense fog, said Abdul Quader Jilani, OC of Hasara Highway Police Station.

The deceased were Md Sobuj, 35, the bus supervisor, and Md Rakib, 25, the driver's assistant.

On December 27, six people from two families, including women and children, were killed and four were seriously injured when a bus rammed into their vehicles at Dhaleshwari toll plaza on the expressway.

Meanwhile in Jashore, Nurul Haque, 28, a representative of a pharmaceutical company, was killed after his motorcycle was hit by a bus on the Jashore-Benapole road in Beneali of Jhikargachha upazila on Thursday night, said Bablur Rahman, OC of Jhikargachha Police Station.

[Our Munshiganj] and Benapole correspondents contributed to this report.]

## India conveys

FROM PAGE 12

The construction of the dam, which will be the largest of its kind in the world with an estimated capacity of 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, was approved last month.

Jaiswal said that New Delhi had also lodged a "solemn protest" with Beijing against its creation of two new counties - one of which includes a disputed area also claimed by India - last month.

Relations between Asian giants India and China, that were strained after a deadly military clash on their disputed border in 2020, have been on the mend since they reached an agreement in October to pull back troops from their last two stand-off points in the western Himalayas.

The two armies have stepped back following the agreement and senior officials held formal talks for the first time in five years last month where they agreed to take small steps to improve relations.

## Come up with specific

FROM PAGE 12

If you cannot reduce prices; if you cannot bring peace to people's lives; if you listen to the World Bank and IMF; if you cannot drop the prices of oil, gas, and electricity; and if you plan to impose more VAT; then you are following the same system."

He added that they do not want an unelected government to prolong its stay in power. "If the government attempts to remain in power for long, evil forces will take advantage of the situation.

Prince called for building a "leftist unity", which will be an alternative to the two parties. He, however, did not mention their names.

"The country's religious minorities feel insecure, which is unacceptable," he said, urging the government to take steps to address the issue instead of denying it.

At the rally, Prince announced that his party would hold views-exchange meetings with political parties, organisations, and people from January 10.

The party will also organise a programme named "March for Democracy" across the country from January 20 to 27.

"The Liberation War of Bangladesh was a people's struggle, and the victory is not a gift. We were prepared, and some extended their support because of that. For which, we are grateful. Today, 53 years after independence, those who dare to undermine the 1972 constitution must be held accountable," said CPB President Mohammad Shah Alam.

He added that those playing games over the Liberation War must stop this immediately.

"Some quarters are unnecessarily creating a debate over whether reforms should come first or elections. Reforms and elections are not contradictory; they are complementary to each other. This is an ongoing process," said Shah Alam.

Terming the interim government "weak", he said that the country's law and order is not under control.

Mob beating is taking place and indiscriminate filing of cases and

arrests for money is going on, the CPB leader said, adding that people are expressing doubts about the government's reform initiatives.

Former CPB president Mujahidul Islam Selim called upon all progressive and left-leaning parties to form a new Juktafront (united front).

He also urged the people to refrain from voting for boat, paddy sheaf, weighing scale, and plough symbols, saying that the parties using these electoral symbols are the same.

"If someone else comes and says that voting rights will not be ensured, that they will remain in power at any cost, carry out reforms, and stay in power until those reforms are completed, I would say such actions would not be different from what the Awami League did," he added.

"We want to bury the Awami League's narrative. However, if anyone seeks to discard its narrative by undermining the Liberation War, I want to tell everyone that we surrendered arms, not our training."

The CPB leader added that the Jamaat-e-Islami has no right to do politics in the country as it worked as the auxiliary political force of the Pakistan occupation force during the Liberation War.

After the rally, the party took out a procession and marched through Shabbagh and several other places.

## Austria's three-way coalition talks fail

AFP, Vienna

Austria's three-way coalition talks to form a new government failed yesterday, with the head of the liberal party announcing its withdrawal from the negotiations.

The far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) topped September 29 national polls for the first time ever, winning 28.8 percent of the vote, ahead of the ruling conservative People's Party (ÖVP) with 26.3 percent.