

S Sudan leaders fuelling violence, instability: UN

AFP, Juba

South Sudan's leaders are fuelling violence and instability in the young nation, a critical United Nations report said yesterday.

The oil-rich but impoverished country, which achieved independence in 2011, is plagued by frequent clashes and political infighting.

Clashes broke out earlier this month in two regions, killing civilians and wounding a peacekeeper, with Human Rights Watch recently noting an "alarming surge of violence".

Shrine set on fire

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a memorandum to the upazila nirbahi officer in this regard.

Yesterday afternoon, hundreds of people gathered and marched to the shrine with lit torches, demanding a ban on the event that drew hundreds of devotees from across the country.

After a brief argument with people present at the shrine, the protesters went on a rampage.

At one point, they set fire to the shrine, stage, marquee, gate, and the tents.

After the vandals left, a devotee in tears said, "I have been attending this gathering for 21 years. We never faced such a situation. No unlawful activities take place here. A group is trying to stop the event for no reason."

Shahidul Islam Jinnah, the shrine's caretaker, said the district administration and police had given written permission for the Urs.

"We have been organising this event for years. Now they are threatening to demolish the shrine," he added.

Nazmul Haque, officer-in-charge of Ghorighat Police Station, said police were trying to calm the situation.

An army team arrived at the site around 8:30pm and a fire service unit around 9:30pm.

"We are working to resolve the dispute through discussions with both parties," the OC said.

Australia into semis

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South Africa and Afghanistan have three points each. Afghanistan have already played their last game in the group phase while the Proteas will be taking on bottom-placed England today in Karachi.

If South Africa beat England, who have already been eliminated after losing both their games so far, the Proteas would reach the semifinal as Group B champions.

For Afghanistan to qualify, England will have to beat South Africa by at least 207 runs if they bat first and if they bat second, they will have to chase down the target within 11.1 overs, assuming a first innings total of 300 in both cases.

In yesterday's game, Sediqullah Atal scored 85 while Azmatullah Omarzai made 67 in Afghanistan's total of 273 all out in 50 overs at the Gaddafi Stadium.

Atal scored a 95-ball 85 with six fours and three sixes before Omarzai boosted the total at the end with a 63-ball 67 at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

Battling first after winning the toss in overcast conditions, Afghanistan lost opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz for nought in the first over to Spencer Johnson.

Ibrahim Zadran, hero of Afghanistan's win over England in the first match with the highest-ever Champions trophy score of 177, added 67 for the second wicket with Atal before he fell for 22 to spinner Adam Zampa.

Atal and skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi (20) put on 68 for the fourth wicket before Australia fought back with four wickets for just 40 runs.

At 199-7 Afghanistan were in danger of being dismissed for a below-par total but Omarzai held the innings together, smashing five sixes, adding an invaluable 74 runs with the last three wickets. Ben Dwarshuis was the best Australian bowler with 3-47 while Zampa took 2-48 and Johnson finished with 2-49.

Nahid Islam

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At the height of the protests in July, Nahid was picked up by law enforcers and tortured until he lost consciousness. He was returned after a couple of days only to be picked up again when the protests gained even more momentum, this time along with five other fellow protesters, and detained at the headquarters of the Detective Branch of police.

In 2018, Nahid participated in the quota reform protests that shook the nation. At the time, he received threats from the university administration and teachers.

In 2019, he ran for the post of cultural secretary at Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu) from Nurul-Rashed-Faruk panel under the banner of Bangladesh Sadharon Chhatra Odhikar Songrokkhon Parishad.

He lost the election and later separated himself from the platform.

Nahid was admitted to DU in 2016.



Palestinians and Hamas fighters attend a funeral procession for 40 civilians and Hamas members killed during the war with Israel, at the Shati camp for Palestinian refugees north of Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Explain how Hasina, others managed to flee

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allies of the AL despite strong evidence and credible allegations of enforced disappearances and murders against them by domestic and international organisations.

Many of them were roaming freely, the BNP leaders alleged, seeking an explanation from the government.

The BNP made the decisions during its Thursday's extended meeting held near the parliament, attended by leaders from across the country. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was the chief guest of the event presided over by acting chairman Tarique Rahman. Both joined virtually from London.

Hasina, the deposed prime minister, fled to India on August 5 following a student-led mass uprising. She is now facing over a hundred cases, including charges of murder, genocide, and crimes against humanity related to the deadly crackdown during the uprising.

BNP Standing Committee member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku said the

government must clearly explain to the public how Hasina and her associates fled the country.

"People are still very confused. The government should at least publish a white paper on the matter," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Blaming the government for its failure to maintain law and order, he said, "Nearly seven months have passed, and the public still does not know how many firearms have been recovered from Awami League leaders and activists. The government should take this issue seriously."

BNP leaders called for the government to take strong diplomatic and legal action against those who have fled and are allegedly conspiring against Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty, and stability from abroad.

The party has decided to demand action against the cohorts of the AL who are trying to destabilise the country, calling for the immediate withdrawal of all politically motivated cases filed by the previous

government and during the 2007-08 caretaker administration.

The BNP proposed that all reform proposals possible before the national election be implemented immediately, while other reforms requiring legal or constitutional amendments be submitted to the House for approval after the polls.

The BNP reiterated that it is the responsibility of all democratically minded and patriotic citizens to support the interim government in ensuring a free, fair, and impartial national election.

The party emphasised that democracy can only be established through free polls where people can choose their representatives.

The people of Bangladesh have been deprived of this fundamental right for nearly a decade and a half, and no further delays are acceptable, said leaders.

The BNP leaders urged the interim government to complete the necessary reforms and conduct the election as soon as possible.

Shilpakala DG hands in resignation letter after fiery speech

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of obligation [on September 9]. It was my intention to bring financial stability and administrative order, allowing art to flourish within the academy's core principles.

"However, it's no longer possible for me to continue working here, and so I'm submitting my resignation letter to the secretary [of Shilpakala, Mohammed Wares Hossain] in front of you all."

He alleged financial mismanagement within the academy, claiming the administration treated allocated funds as "personal assets".

"My request for a Tk165 crore budget was not fully met. If we [Shilpakala authorities] must repeatedly call upon the administration and still fail to establish a collaborative and peaceful working environment due to bureaucratic obstacles, I don't see

how I can effectively fulfill my role here.

"I've given this decision a lot of thought. It's now time for me to return to my own theatre work."

He expressed sincere thanks to the Shilpakala Academy staffers for their unwavering commitment in restoring the nation's artistic spirit after a tumultuous period.

He further voiced his concerns over restrictions on cultural expression, particularly the prohibition of the term "Adivasi" (indigenous communities).

"We were told that we can't even utter the word 'Adivasi.' As I step down today, I now utter this word and express my heartfelt wish that the Adivasis receive their rightful recognition, that they are free from all forms of oppression and can live

with the same rights and dignity as every other citizen of this country."

Jamil concluded his resignation speech with a broader call for social justice.

"I dream of a discrimination-free Bangladesh, a nation that upholds the ideals our martyrs sacrificed their lives for. We're losing sight of the spirit of the recent July movement, and I sincerely hope that Shilpakala Academy will work toward realising that vision in the future."

However, on the same stage, the Secretary of Shilpakala Academy, Mohammad Wares Hossain, said he does not have the authority to accept the resignation and that the responsibility lies with the cultural affairs ministry's secretary.

Md Mofidur Rahman, acting secretary of the ministry, told

They also expressed concerns over the rising prices of essentials and the worsening law and order situation in the country.

They accused certain business groups, allegedly benefiting from the previous government, of contributing to instability and called on all political parties and professional organisations within the anti-fascist movement to unite against their activities.

They also made the decision to seek a compilation of a list of individuals affected over the last 16 years, particularly during the July-August movement.

The leaders urged the government to provide state recognition, compensation for families of victims, and treatment and financial support for the injured.

They also instructed party members, activists, and affiliated organisations to remain active in their communities and engage with the public through people-centric programmes.

Prothom Alo that he heard about the resignation but has not yet received the official letter that Jamil handed to Wares.

"I'll make further comments after receiving the letter."

Later, Jamil spoke to a crowd of theatre activists outside the Nityashala auditorium.

He said he would withdraw his resignation only if some conditions were met: Shilpakala Academy must be allowed to operate with complete autonomy and free from interference by the cultural affairs ministry, whose role should only be providing necessary legal counsel; the authorities must allocate necessary funds for the academy; and the Shilpakala Academy must have the right to use the term "Adivasi" when it needs or wants to.

unwavering commitment to establishing a just and equal society. We strongly believe that the July 2024 mass uprising was not just a victory against a fascist regime but also a pledge to shape our future. Let us unite, hand in hand, to build a Bangladesh where every citizen's voice is heard, where the struggle for justice and human rights will be at the heart of politics, and where equality and human dignity will form the foundation of the state.

Now is the time to dream anew, to march forward, and build a new Bangladesh.

Therefore, let us all take an oath. Let us unite and move forward with unwavering determination in our struggle to establish the second republic.

The second republic is not an unattainable dream. It is our promise!

Akhter Hossen

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and became president of the student organisation's DU unit.

In 2023, Akhter floated the Ganotantrik Chhatra Shakti, breaking away from Chhatra Odhikar Parishad on October 3, 2023, in which he was the convener.

Akhter was arrested from the base of the Raju Memorial Sculpture on the Dhaka University campus around 3:00pm on July 17, 2024, just when the quota protest was heating up.

He was admitted to Dhaka University in 2015.

‘Make a deal or we’re out’

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you've had problems bringing people into your military? And do you think that it's respectful to come to the Oval Office of the United States of America and attack the administration that is trying to prevent the destruction of your country?"

Zelensky continued that under war, "Everybody has problems, even you" and that the US would feel the war "in the future."

"You don't know that," Trump responded.

Trump then backed up his vice president as the leaders argued about whether the US had failed to stop Putin after the 2014 annexation of Crimea, and the situation became increasingly tense.

"Don't tell us what we're going to feel. We're trying to solve a problem. Don't tell us what we're going to feel," Trump continued.

"You are in no position to dictate that, remember that," Trump said, as Zelenskyy defended that he was simply answering Vance's questions.

"You don't have the cards right now. With us, you start having cards," Trump continued, as Zelesnky said, "I'm not playing cards."

"You're not acting at all thankful," said Trump.

"It's going to be a very hard thing to do business like this," said Trump.

"It's going to be a tough deal to make because the attitudes have to change."

Trump then cut short the meeting with Zelensky saying the Ukrainian leader is "not ready" for peace with Russia.

Zelensky left in his motorcade shortly after, without holding a planned joint press conference. The resources deal was left unsigned, the White House said.

Trump had alarmed US allies and upended Washington's longstanding Ukraine policy two weeks ago when he spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin and started talks on ending the three-year-old war -- without Kyiv's involvement.

Trump told reporters he had since spoken on "numerous occasions" to Putin.

The US leader has demanded a deal granting Washington preferential access to Ukraine's rare-earth and other natural resources as the price for any continued backing -- even though he has refused to commit to giving Kyiv security guarantees as part of a truce with Russia.

The clash came despite Trump recently softening his tone on Zelensky in recent days, after berating him last week as a "dictator without elections", blaming Ukraine for Russia's February 2022 invasion and echoing a series of Kremlin talking points about the war.

Democracy not safe

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He stressed that security is a right for all, cautioning that neither minorities nor the majority can be safe unless justice and the rule of law are upheld.

Drawing from the Mahabharata, Tarique said Lord Sree Krishna descended on earth over five thousand years ago in the city of Mathura to defeat the evil king Kansa, who was the tyrannical ruler at the time.

He said, similarly, Bangladesh had endured over a decade of oppression under an autocratic regime, which was ultimately overthrown by a mass uprising involving people from all walks of life.

However, he warned that the regime's lackeys continue to conspire.

Addressing the Hindu community, he urged them to recognise the reality that a certain faction has politically exploited them for the past 17 years, calling such awareness an important realisation.

BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Shahadat Hossain also spoke at the event.

Four lemons for Tk 120!

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"How can the price increase so drastically in just seven days?" he questioned.

Several other buyers shared similar frustrations.

Fazol Haque, who has been trading lemons and green chillies at Karwan Bazar kitchen market for 35 years, said that he had never seen such high prices of lemons. "The lemon price rises at the beginning of every Ramadan, but this hike is unprecedented."

Wholesaler Abul Kalam explained that the usual daily supply of lemons in the Karwan Bazar kitchen market is seven to eight lakh, but it has now dropped to four to five lakh.

"Usually demand for lemons increases during Ramadan, but its supply has dropped this time."

Kalam pointed out low rainfall as a factor behind reduced lemon yield. "The supply is already low, and some traders are stocking the sour fruit to inflate prices further."

Wholesale lemon prices have almost doubled, with four pieces of this sour fruit now selling at Tk 80-100, he said.

Interestingly, just a couple of months ago, lemon prices were at their lowest in years. The wholesale price went down to Tk 5-6 for four pieces of small and medium-sized lemons, said Kalam.

Israel wants

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hostages each week in exchange for Palestinians held by Israel.

Meanwhile, Israel's military said yesterday it had killed a Hezbollah weapons smuggler in a strike on eastern Lebanon a day earlier, the latest attack since a November ceasefire halted the Israel-Hezbollah war.

Lebanon's health ministry on Thursday reported one death and one injury in a strike on a vehicle in Hermel, the area the Israeli military said it had targeted, reports AFP.

In a statement, the military said the Israeli air force "conducted an intelligence-based strike in the area of Hermel and eliminated the terrorist Mohammed Mahdi Ali Shaheen... who had been coordinating terrorist transactions for the purchase of weapons".

It added that the slain militant had "recently been involved in transporting weapons from Syria to Lebanon".