

Turkey suspends C-130 flights after fatal plane crash

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey suspended flights by its C-130 military cargo planes as a precautionary measure a day after one crashed in neighbouring Georgia, killing all 20 people on board, the defence ministry said yesterday.

The plane crashed on Tuesday while returning home from Azerbaijan, with the victims' bodies due to be repatriated yesterday, the ministry said.

"Flights by our (C-130) planes have been suspended as of November 12, 2025," a ministry statement said, adding that operations would resume once all planes had undergone detailed technical inspections and safety checks.

The plane took off from Ganja airport in western Azerbaijan on Tuesday afternoon but crashed shortly after crossing the border into eastern Georgia, the ministry said at the time.

Charter's legal basis

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to obtain a proper legal mandate from the chief adviser before going to the next step."

In a 13-minute televised address to the nation in the afternoon, Yunus announced that the national election and the referendum on the July charter will be held on the same day, as part of the government's efforts to resolve the ongoing political crisis.

In an immediate response to Yunus's speech earlier, NCP Joint Convener Sarwar Tushar said, "The government must explain why the chief adviser cannot issue the [July charter implementation] order himself."

The chief adviser may have maintained legality, but questions remain over its legitimacy -- and doubts persist about how much legitimacy will be retained in the future."

NCP later called an emergency meeting of its policymakers around 5:00pm at its temporary central office in the capital's Banglamotor to discuss the order and various issues mentioned in the chief adviser's address to the nation. Along with the party's top leaders, those who were assigned responsibilities regarding the reforms also attended.

Nurul Kabir, Hanif

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Mahfuz Anam. Newly incorporated members of the council include Shahed Mohammad Ali of Samakal, Inam Ahmed of The Business Standard, Hasan Hafiz of Kaler Kantha, Abu Taher of Bangladesh Pratinidhi and Md Rezaul Karim of Daily Sun.



Members congratulated the new committee and pledged to strengthen the council's activities through cooperation.

Speaking on the occasion, newly-elected president Nurul Kabir said, "We will work tirelessly to ensure free, safe, and independent journalism."

Outgoing president Mahfuz Anam expressed hope that under the new leadership, the council would continue to work to uphold responsible journalism.

He called for steps to make the editorial institute more effective and emphasised that editors, remaining free from any influence, would continue to play a leading role in advancing Bangladesh's media.

Arson, blockades in some districts

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one of the country's busiest routes. They also burned tree trunks on the road, creating tailbacks on both sides.

In Pirojpur Sadar upazila, miscreants set fire to the Kadamtala branch of Grameen Bank early yesterday. Night guards managed to douse the fire with water and sand, preventing major damage, said branch manager Anisur Rahaman.

In Shariatpur's Jajira upazila, AL activists took position at five points along a 28-kilometre stretch of the main road around 6:00am. Several crude bombs exploded there, including near a police vehicle.

In Gopalganj, the Public Works Department office building and a Grameen Bank branch came under arson attack on Wednesday night.

Md Shah Alam, officer-in-charge of Gopalganj Sadar Police Station, told The Daily Star that miscreants hurled eight to nine petrol bombs at a vehicle parked in front of the PWD building's garage before fleeing.

A similar attack occurred at the Ulupur branch of Grameen Bank around the same time.

In Brahmanbaria, miscreants laid a plastic pipe on a railway track



This winter, vegetable fields in Rajshahi's Paba and Mohonpur upazilas have yielded a bumper harvest. Every day, traders collect fresh produce, including cauliflower, radish, cabbage, and bottle gourd, directly from the fields, package it by the roadside, and transport it to Dhaka. While business booms, traders quietly report a troubling trend of extortion, costing them an additional Tk 30 per maund. The photo was taken yesterday near Nowhata Haat in Paba upazila.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Referendum, polls on same day

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adviser's address, some of them reacted sharply.

The BNP, in a statement after a meeting of its Standing Committee, said the committee thanked the chief adviser for the decision to hold the referendum and the election on the same day.

Earlier in the day, Salahuddin Ahmed, a member of the committee, criticised the process of forming the upper house, the Constitutional Reform Council, and the referendum question itself.

The Jamaat-e-Islami argued that holding the referendum and the national polls on the same day could spark fresh tensions instead of resolving the crisis.

The National Citizen Party said the charter had lost legitimacy since the implementation order was issued by the president, not the chief adviser.

POLITICAL DIVISION

On October 28, the National Consensus Commission submitted its recommendations for implementing the July charter with two alternatives -- both involving a referendum and an implementation order. It left the timing of the referendum to the government's discretion.

But divisions among political parties deepened over the timing of the referendum, implementation order, PR system, notes of dissent and other issues.

On November 3, the government asked the parties to reach a consensus within a week, or else it would "act as necessary."

After the deadline expired, the government set the chief adviser's address for yesterday.

He then announced the decisions following an advisory council meeting earlier in the day.

REFERENDUM

Yunus said the government had adopted important provisions to implement the July charter, including holding a referendum on its constitutional reform proposals and forming a Constitution Reform Council thereafter.

"After considering all matters, we have decided that the referendum will be held on the same day as the upcoming national parliamentary election, in the first half of February," he said, adding that this would make the process more festive and cost-effective.

In the referendum question, citizens will be asked if they approve the July charter's implementation order and proposed constitutional reforms listed in four sections below the question.

The four sections contain issues like the formation of the caretaker government, Election Commission, and other constitutional institutions, bicameral parliamentary system, parties' obligation to implement the agreed upon reform proposals, and the implementation of the other reforms as per the political parties' commitments.

Voters will answer "Yes" or "No" to the single referendum question.

Out of the 48 constitutional reform proposals included in the July charter, 30 have secured consensus among most parties, including the BNP, Jamaat, and NCP.

The remaining 18 proposals, mostly involving fundamental reforms, faced dissent from at least one major party.

The BNP formally registered its dissent on appointment of the chief adviser to the caretaker government; the formation of an upper house through proportional representation system; the authority of the upper house to amend the constitution; the eligibility of a party chief to serve simultaneously as prime minister; and the process to appoint the ombudsman, the public service commission, and the comptroller and auditor general.

The BNP supported holding the referendum on election day, while the Jamaat and its allies have launched protest programmes demanding that the referendum be held earlier. Their demands also included formation of the upper house through the PR system.

They have threatened an indefinite sit-in from November 16 if their demands are not met.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary has expressed solidarity with Jamaat.

UPPER HOUSE

If the referendum yields a "yes" majority, the Constitution Reform Council will be formed with MPs to be elected in the upcoming election. They will take oath separately as council representatives on the same day as the swearing-in ceremony for parliament.

The upper house will be formed within 30 working days after the council completes the July charter's implementation process.

Its formation will be based on proportion to the votes received by each party in the national election and its term will end with that of the lower house.

The BNP has opposed forming the upper house based on vote share, preferring seat share in the lower house instead. Jamaat supports PR on shares of votes.

IMPLEMENTATION ORDER

In one of the alternative ways presented for implementing the charter in its final days, the consensus commission had recommended putting the reform proposals in a bill and including the bill in the charter's implementation order.

It suggested the bill would automatically include the charter in the constitution if the reform council failed to complete the implementation process within 270 days.

The BNP had vehemently objected to the proposed clause, calling it "irrational, politically motivated, and absurd". It argued that no bill can become law without the president's assent after passage by parliament.

The party also questioned the legality

of the reform council's formation, noting that only the Election Commission is not constitutionally mandated to conduct elections for the formation of such bodies.

The president issued the order despite growing pressure from the Jamaat and NCP, who demanded legal recognition for the charter.

The NCP had specifically wanted the chief adviser, not the president, to issue the order. The party argued that it would have been a "people's order" if it had been issued by the chief adviser.

According to the Chief Adviser's Press Wing, the advisory council approved the order earlier yesterday before Yunus signed and sent it to the president.

The order stipulates that the council will determine its own procedures, require a quorum of 60 members, and adopt reforms by majority vote.

The Speaker will chair the council and cast the deciding vote in case of a tie.

DIFFERENCES 'MINOR'

Yunus described the consensus on key reform proposals with "minor differences" on the others as a "historic achievement".

"The distance appears to be huge at first glance, which is not unusual in a democratic process. But in reality, the discord is not very deep," he said.

"There is no disagreement about the necessity, principles, and goals of reform," he added.

FAIR, PARTICIPATORY POLLS

Yunus said political parties in favour of the uprising must remain united about holding a fair election because people have been deprived of their right to vote for almost one and a half decades.

They are eagerly waiting to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming election.

"Otherwise, the nation will face great danger. I have expressed my apprehension about this several times before," he said.

He said the interim government has reached an "important juncture" in its term after being formed in August last year on the strength of the July uprising.

He reiterated that his government has three key responsibilities. These are to bring the perpetrators of July atrocities to justice, to arrange necessary reforms for transitioning to an accountable and effective democratic system, and to transfer power to an elected government through fair polls.

"We are taking all necessary preparations to ensure that the election is festive, participatory, and fair. We are working tirelessly to fulfill our entrusted duty properly," Yunus said.

Talking about the trial of key figures of the Awami League regime, he said, the International Crimes Tribunal is going to deliver its first verdict soon.

"At the same time, in a first for the country, we've started the trial of heinous crimes like enforced disappearances," he said.

them on the Dhaka-Chattogram railway tracks in Maheshpur area on Wednesday night.

A patrol team removed the obstruction, allowing uninterrupted train operations, said Feni Railway Station Master Md Harun.

In Barishal's Ujjipur upazila, two miscreants set fire to the BNP office in Ward 4 of Guthia Bazar early yesterday, said Shahin Hawlader, president of Guthia Union BNP.

Meanwhile, in Narayanganj's Araihazar, homes of BNP supporters were attacked and vandalised by miscreants. At least seven people were injured, according to police.

Araiha Police Officer-in-Charge Khandakar Nasir Uddin said the attack took place early yesterday.

In Thakurgaon, a police officer was threatened by a local BNP and Juba Dal leader over the release of four AL activists detained by police.

The incident occurred on Wednesday when the BNP and Juba Dal leaders went to the police station to demand their release.

Our correspondents in Faridpur, Pirojpur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj, Brahmanbaria, Barguna, Barishal, Narayanganj and Thakurgaon contributed to this report.

Japan PM Takaichi says she sleeps only 2-4 hours a night

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said yesterday she only sleeps for between two and four hours every night, while she also faces criticism for encouraging people to overwork.

The revelation about how little she sleeps came after Takaichi raised eyebrows last week by arranging a 3:00 am staff meeting in her office to prepare for a parliamentary session.

"I sleep about two hours now, four hours at the longest. I feel it's bad for my skin," she told a legislative committee, where she had been asked about the importance of reducing Japan's notoriously long work hours.

Japan has long struggled to strike a healthy work-life balance, with many workers facing heavy pressure at the office. It even has a word -- "karoshi" -- for people who die from overwork.

Takaichi was also asked to explain her government's discussions about possibly extending the upper limit on overtime work in order to encourage economic growth.

She defended the discussion, saying that workers and employers have different needs. Some people choose to work two jobs to make ends meet, she said, while businesses impose strict limits on overtime.

Internet freedom declines in US, Germany: study

AFP, Washington

Internet freedom declined in both the United States and Germany as Western democracies joined authoritarian states in imposing growing restrictions online, an annual survey by Freedom House said yesterday.

The Washington-based democracy promotion research group said global internet freedom fell for the 15th straight year, with declines in a number of countries that remain classified as "free."

"We find worsening repression in authoritarian and authoritarian-leaning states, largely because governments in those countries see restrictions on the internet and online expression as a means of maintaining power," said Kian Vesteinsson, the report's co-author.

"Much more specific to 2025, we've seen conditions in democracies declining," he told AFP.

"Unfortunately we see across North America and Western Europe generally a trend towards closing civic space in some countries, and in others deepening restrictions on people posting hateful or problematic content," he said.

The United States scored 73 on a scale of 100 on internet freedom in the year through May 2025 covered by the report, its lowest-ever figure and down three points from the previous

year.

The report pointed in part to the detention by President Donald Trump's administration of a number of non-US citizens over their online expression.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has vowed to deport people over statements on Israel, decisions challenged in courts.

Germany also saw a decline of three points to 74. Freedom House said that Germany was seeing growing self-censorship and also the zealous enforcement of laws that prohibit hate speech and defamation.

It pointed to a suspended jail sentence and fine imposed on the editor of a far-right website over a social media post that included a manipulated image to criticize a politician.

The Trump administration has repeatedly criticized the free speech record of Germany, which says its Nazi past makes it critical to impose safeguards.

The most severe declines in the report were registered by Kenya, which briefly shut down the internet in response to nationwide protests, as well as Venezuela and Georgia.

Two countries were downgraded -- Serbia was classified as "partly free" instead of "free" and Nicaragua was marked as "not free" instead of "partially free."

BNP thanks Yunus

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Charter while keeping the discussion "non-confrontational," said one participant, requesting anonymity.

"The ball is now in the government's court. There is no reason to create any trouble. The next parliament will be formed after the national polls," one committee member said during the meeting.

Earlier in the day, Salahuddin criticised the government's decisions, saying he objected to four aspects of the referendum ballot, the plan to form a Constitutional