

International

Indonesia's conservative Aceh whips unmarried couples after hotel raid

Two women unable to walk after the painful punishment

BANDA ACEH: Six couples were publicly whipped in Indonesia's conservative Aceh province yesterday for relations outside marriage, with at least two women unable to walk after the painful punishment. Flogging is common for a range of offences in the region at the tip of Sumatra island, including gambling, drinking alcohol, and having gay sex.

It is the only province in the world's biggest Muslim-majority country that imposes Islamic law. The twelve people whipped yesterday were arrested late last year during a raid on a hotel in the province's capital Banda Aceh. Four people were each flogged seven times after being found with a member of the opposite sex who wasn't a relation. The others who were caught in more compromising positions received between 17-25 strokes for having intimate relations outside of marriage, an official said.

All 12 also served several months in prison before the public punishment. Some women cried out in pain as a masked sharia officer lashed them, and at least two had to be carried from the scene by sharia officers. Dozens of spectators and journalists watched quietly. Some winced occasionally after the blows, while others used smartphones and tablets to film the spectacle. "This law is designed to have a deterrent effect, not only for the offenders but for the spectators who watch the caning," said the head of the local public order agency, Marwan, who like many Indonesian goes by one name.

He added: "The pain of being flogged is not that bad, the embarrassment is worse." Rights groups have slammed public caning as cruel, and Indonesia's

President Joko Widodo has called for it to end. But the practice has wide support among Aceh's mostly Muslim population—around 98 percent of its five million residents practice Islam. Aceh adopted religious law after it was granted special autonomy in 2001, an attempt by the central government to quell a long-running separatist insurgency. In December, two men caught having sex with underage girls were whipped 100 times each.

Drug suspect faces death

In another development, a French man faces execution under Indonesia's strict drug laws after he was caught using a false-bottomed suitcase to smuggle narcotics into the Southeast Asian nation, an official said yesterday. Prosecutors have accused Felix Dorfin of trafficking four kilograms of cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamines. The 35-year-old from Benthune in northern France was arrested after arriving at Lombok island's airport from Singapore in September. "We are charging him with drug possession, carrying drugs to Indonesia from abroad, and trafficking drugs," lead prosecutor Ginung Pratidina told the court.

French drug suspect faces death penalty

He faced a potential death sentence if convicted, Pratidina added. Dorfin was read the charges with the aid of an English translator. The Frenchman escaped from jail in late January by sawing through bars on the second floor window of the prison and rappelling to freedom with a sarong. He spent nearly two weeks on the run before he was captured again in a forest in North Lombok. Police said Dorfin tried to bribe officers to let him go. A female police officer was arrested for allegedly



BANDA ACEH: An Indonesian woman is whipped in public in Banda Aceh yesterday. Six couples were publicly whipped in Indonesia's conservative Aceh province for relations outside marriage, with at least two women unable to walk after the painful punishment. — AFP

helping Dorfin escape from jail in exchange for Rp 14.5 million (around \$1,000).

Indonesia has some of the world's strictest drug laws—including death penalty sentences for drug traffickers. It has executed several foreign drug smugglers in the past including Australians Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran,

which sparked diplomatic tensions between the two countries. Indonesia has not executed anyone since 2016, but a number of foreigners are still on death row. Serge Allaoui, a convicted French drug smuggler, has been on death row since 2007, while British grandmother Lindsay Sandiford has been on death row since 2013. —Agencies

Israeli forces kill 2 Palestinians over car-ramming attack

RAMALLAH: Israeli forces yesterday shot and killed two young Palestinians who carried out a car-ramming attack in the occupied West Bank, injuring a soldier and a policeman, police and the army said. The army said security forces fired at three assailants, "neutralizing two of them and lightly injuring a third", while police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said two of the Palestinians were killed. "Assailants ran over a number of soldiers who had stopped at the side of the road on their way out of the village" of Kafr Nama, northwest of Ramallah, a military statement said. "An (army) officer was severely injured and a border police soldier was lightly injured as a result," the army said.

Rosenfeld said that the policeman injured in the pre-dawn attack was subsequently released from hospital. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised soldiers for having swiftly "eliminated" the Palestinians and vowed to fast-track the punitive demolitions of their homes. "I have ordered that the demolitions of these homes be speeded up," he said. "We are determined to continue our vigorous struggle against the murderers and



RAMALLAH: An Israeli army bulldozer removes a destroyed car, after two Palestinian were shot dead as they ran over troops, in the occupied West Bank village of Kafr Nama yesterday. — AFP

against terrorism everywhere." Israel regularly razes the homes of Palestinians accused of carrying out attacks against Israelis.

"House demolition is an administrative procedure. It is carried out without trial and without any requirement to present evidence," Israeli rights group B'Tselem says on its website. The Palestinian health ministry named the two men killed as Amir Mahmoud Darraj and Yussef Anqawi, both 20. Kafr Nama's mayor said that troops were leaving the village on foot after a raid to arrest a Palestinian suspect there when the incident occurred. Israel's army said its troops had arrested 11 alleged operatives of the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas in the Ramallah area overnight.

Firebombs

It added that "an initial inquiry suggests that earlier in the evening, the assailants of the car-ramming attack also hurled firebombs at a crossing". "Additional firebombs were later found in the vehicle that had been used in the terror attack," the army statement said. Hamas, which runs the Gaza Strip and has fought three wars with Israel, praised the attack but stopped short of claiming it. A statement hailing the attack said the Palestinian people "will continue their struggle against the occupier until they achieve complete freedom and free their land". Palestinian car-ramming, knife and gun attacks against Israelis occur sporadically in the West Bank, which has been occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War. — AFP

in Bangui on February 6.

The deal brings together President Faustin-Archange Touadera and the leaders of the 14 armed groups who control most of the CAR. It is the eighth attempt to bring peace to the CAR, one of the world's poorest and most unstable countries, since mainly Muslim rebels ousted president Francois Bozize, a Christian, in 2013. France, the former colonial ruler, intervened militarily under a UN mandate as fears grew of a Rwandan-style genocide. The Seleka were forced from power and in February 2016, Touadera, a former prime minister, was elected president.

Anger

Under peace accord's provisions, Touadera agreed to form an "inclusive" government. But in the team unveiled on Sunday, the ministers in sensitive key posts all kept their jobs, while six of the 14 armed groups obtained no post at all. One of those left out, the Movement of Central African Freedom Fighters for Justice (MLCJ), a small group in the north of the country, warned the authorities "to look again" at the list.

The armed groups had also demanded that prime minister be chosen from their ranks. But the job was handed to Firmin Ngrebada, Touadera's former cabinet director. "By playing at 'Let's take the same people and start over', the president of the republic ... has stifled all hope at birth," the FPFC said. The deal was prepared in 2017 by the African Union and has the support of Bangui's partners, notably former colonial power France, along with a 12,000-strong UN stabilization mission, MINUSCA. — AFP

CAR peace deal under strain as militia quits

BANGUI: Less than a month after it was signed, the Central African Republic's peace agreement was under strain yesterday after a militia group abandoned the deal and a second said it was quitting a new government designed to be the keystone of the accord. The Democratic Front of the Central African People (FPDC), one of 14 armed groups that inked the so-called Khartoum Agreement, announced it was walking away in protest at a newly formed government. The FPDC "is resolved purely and simply to withdraw from the peace process," it said in a statement sent to AFP.

The group, whose stronghold is in the northwest, protested that the new government formed on Sunday was "far from being inclusive". Just hours after the ministerial list was unveiled, the Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic (FPRC), said it was leaving the government. The FPRC did not specify whether it planned to remain part of the peace process, but charged the authorities with "bad faith, amateurism and incompetence." The peace agreement was forged after negotiations in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum before being signed

4 US tourists and one pilot killed in Kenya chopper crash

NAIROBI: Four American tourists and a Kenyan pilot were killed when their helicopter crashed on a remote island in a lake in northwest Kenya, police said yesterday. The accident occurred in the Central Island National Park in Lake Turkana on Sunday evening, police said in a statement. "There were five people on board, four of them were US citizens and the pilot, Capt Marius Magonga," the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority said in a statement. Magonga was also a pilot for Kenya's deputy president, William Ruto, who owned the crashed helicopter.

The helicopter "lost contact and

crashed" shortly after taking off with a second chopper from Lake Turkana's Central Island, the statement said. Rescuers found the wreckage about seven hours later "with no survivors". "The cause of the incident is yet to be established and the details of the deceased will be released once the next of kin have been notified," a police statement said. Known as the Jade Sea, Lake Turkana, is the most saline lake in East Africa, the largest desert lake in the world, and a popular tourist spot.

Its Central Island is made up of three active volcanoes, according to the Kenya Wildlife Service. The lake is an important stopover for migratory birds and its islands are breeding grounds for the Nile crocodile, hippopotamus and several snake species. Last year, UNESCO placed the massive expanse of water on its list of endangered World Heritage Sites, in part because it is threatened by Ethiopia's construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Omo River, which replenishes the lake seasonally. — AFP

Dutch recall envoy from Iran in murder plot row

THE HAGUE: The Netherlands said yesterday it had recalled its ambassador from Tehran after Iran expelled two Dutch diplomats in a dispute over an alleged plot to assassinate regime opponents. Dutch authorities accused Iran in January of involvement in the murder of two dissidents on Dutch soil in 2015 and 2017, and the EU slapped sanctions on Tehran over the killings. Foreign Minister Stef Blok said in a letter to parliament that the government "has decided to recall the Netherlands' ambassador to Tehran for consultations" over the row.

Iran's decision to expel the Dutch officials—which was not previously announced in public—was "not acceptable and is negative for the development of the bilateral relationship," Blok said. He said Iran's move was itself a tit-for-tat response to the Netherlands' expulsion of two Iranian embassy workers in June 2018 "due to strong indications from (Dutch intelligence) that Iran has been involved in the liquidations on Dutch territory of two Dutch people of Iranian origin." Iran had informed Dutch authorities of the decision to expel the two diplomats on February 20 and they were deported back to the Netherlands on Sunday, Blok said. The Dutch had also summoned the Iranian ambassador over the issue, Blok said. Dutch police have previously named the two murder victims as Ali Motamed, 56, who was killed in the central city of Almere in 2015, and Ahmad Molla Nissi, 52, murdered in The Hague in 2017. — AFP

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PROPOSES TO APPOINT A DISTRIBUTOR FOR THE STATE OF KUWAIT

HPCL Middle East FZCO, a fully owned subsidiary of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, India (HPCL) proposes to appoint a distributor for the state of Kuwait to market their entire range of lubricants and other special application petroleum products in the state of Kuwait.

The distributor should be capable of (a) receiving, (b) storing the product in Kuwait and (c) distributing the products to retailers/customers in the state of Kuwait

- A firm registered in the state of Kuwait for operating the Distributorship
- Sound financial standing
- Warehouse space
- Awareness of Rules & Regulations of the state of Kuwait and capacity to obtain all necessary approvals in the stipulated time.

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Interested parties may please download the application form from our website www.hindustanpetroleum.com or use the following link for downloading the application form: <https://www.hplubricants.in/distributor/become-a-cfa-distributor>

Send in your completed application form along with requisite documents addressed to General Manager, International Trade in the following email id: hpitrade@mail.hpcl.co.in
Last date of submission of filled application is on 18th of March 2019

For any assistance/clarification, may wish to contact
Mr. Subhendu Mohanty at smohanty@hpcl.in
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