

Soviet minister in Beijing on unannounced visit Gorbachev fall likely to bolster Sino-Soviet ties

BEIJING, Aug 20: The ouster of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev is likely to bolster Chinese conservatives who had privately branded him a traitor to communism, reports AP.

But analysts stressed that fears of heightened turmoil across the border will overshadow any pleasure some Chinese leaders may feel over seeing an ideological rival fall.

"We hope and also believe that the Soviet people will overcome difficulties, solve their own problems by themselves, maintain political stability and achieve economic development," China said Tuesday in its first public response to the leadership change in Moscow — a Foreign Ministry statement.

Marshall Goldman, associate director of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University, said he expected the Soviet leadership change to strengthen Chinese conservatives. The sight of tanks on the streets of Moscow following the announcement that Gorbachev had been pushed aside echoed the military suppression of a pro-democracy movement in China in 1989.

"These developments will be used as proof that reform movements must be controlled," said Goldman, who was in Beijing to give a series of lectures on the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev's removal also will force the United States to change its approach in dealing with China, Goldman said.

The United States will be a little less assertive about what it thinks China should or should not do," he said.

"The China card is coming out of the deck again, and the US is going to want to use that card because of uncertainties over the future role of the Soviet Union and relations between the two countries. I think we're going to want China's support and we can't take them for granted anymore."

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Belonogov arrived Tuesday in Beijing on an unannounced visit, but

Soviet Embassy spokesman Yuri Lyssenko said the talks were scheduled before Gorbachev was ousted.

The Foreign Ministry statement said Sino-Soviet relations 'will continue to enjoy unimpeded growth.'

China has worked publicly during the past two years to improve relations with the Soviet Union. Ties were normalized during Gorbachev's visit in May 1989, ending a 30-year split between the two countries over ideological differences.

Gorbachev's visit, which occurred while protesters were taking to the streets calling for democracy, underscored new disputes between Moscow and Beijing over socialist reforms.

Leaders of the Chinese democracy movement used the worldwide attention given to Gorbachev's visit to draw attention to their own demands

Products reappear

MOSCOW, Aug 20: Products that disappeared from Moscow stores years ago suddenly reappeared today, a day after President Mikhail Gorbachev was ousted by a coup and a State-of-Emergency Committee took over governing the Soviet Union, reports AP.

Early in the morning, Muscovites started lining up in front of government groceries, well known for their empty and dusty display cases, to buy sausage, cheese, coffee, sweets, poultry — and even smoked salmon.

The new authorities had obviously cracked open some stocks previously kept well out of sight, with their eye on public opinion.

One elderly woman reeling under a stack of boxes of biscuits said, "You'd better take advantage of this. You can't tell how long it will last."

"I haven't smelled anything like that for ages, exclaimed one young woman entering a tea and coffee shop.

Gorbachev refused to step down

MOSCOW, Aug 20: Mikhail Gorbachev was apparently brought back to Moscow from his vacation home in Crimea late Monday on board a special military plane, a close aide of Russian President Boris Yeltsin said today, reports AP.

Gennady Burbulis made the statement to Russian deputies.

He said that several special military aircraft arrived at Moscow's Vnukovo airport at 9.45 pm (1845 GMT) Monday and that the Russian leadership thought that the ousted Soviet President was on board one of the planes.

The report came after the Russian news agency Ria, quoting witnesses, said Gorbachev left his Black Sea dacha for an unknown destination late Monday.

The witnesses said Gorbachev had departed aboard an airplane, and appeared to be in good health.

Gorbachev had reportedly been placed under house arrest at his dacha after being overthrown by a conservative coup on Monday and replaced by Vice President Gennady Yanayev under pretext of "health problems."

A source close to Russian President Yeltsin said earlier that Gorbachev had been flown to Moscow overnight Saturday from the Crimea for a meeting with hardline leaders to sign away his rights to the presidency, but he refused, and was flown back to Crimea, in the Soviet republic of Ukraine.

In the meeting Gorbachev faced Vice President Gennady Yanayev, Defence and Interior Ministers Dmitri Yazov and Boris Pugo, KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov, Oleg Blakanov, responsible for military industry in the Communist Party Central Committee, and Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov.

Russian parliament

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world leaders, he assured leaders of Eastern Europe that their fledgling democracies were irreversible despite the return of old style communists to power in the Kremlin.

"I want to take this opportunity to assure them of our continued interest and the need to remain calm in those countries," he said.

Strauss, Bush said, will be going immediately to Moscow to assess the situation there and would not be presenting his diplomatic credentials to the coup government. He said Strauss would return to Washington to give a personal report in the next several days.

"I don't want to do anything to legitimize what is clearly an illegal coup," he said.

The unofficial Baltfax news agency reported today.

The report named the three as Estonian Foreign Minister Lennart Meri, Danis Ivans, the First Deputy Chairman of the Latvian Supreme Council, and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Algirdas Saudargas.

Earlier report said, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets Tuesday and shouted for the downfall of the military and Communist Party hard-liners who ousted Gorbachev a day earlier.

The new government faced an immediate economic threat from coal miners in Siberia and the Soviet far north who walked off the job, heeding Yeltsin's call for a general strike. But elsewhere, the strike was not widespread.

Meanwhile, Yeltsin today named a defence minister for the republic, Konstantin Kobetz.

Kobetz had served as chairman of the State Committee for the Defence of the Russian Federation.

"To ensure precise coordination of leadership of troops and prevent the use of troops against the people, I have decided to appoint (Kobetz) Russian Defence Minister, until the activity of constitutional bodies is fully restored," Yeltsin's statement said.

The Foreign Minister of Russia (arrived in Paris today to seek Western backing for the rebel Soviet republic and to form a government-in-exile if Russian President's protest movement was crushed.

Andrei Kozirev, who left Moscow this morning, said Yeltsin had sent him to the west because only a president, a Prime Minister or a foreign minister could form a government-in-exile without being granted special powers.

Asked if he planned to form a cabinet, Kozirev told a news conference: "It's one meaning of my mission I hope it won't reach that point."

In Moscow a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said Kozirev was due to go to the United States, via Paris, to discuss the overthrow of President Gorbachev.

The three breakaway Baltic republics have also designated officials who will be empowered to set up governments in exile, should the Soviet military take control of the states,



Subha, a prime suspect in the murder of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, committed suicide along with others on Tuesday after they were cornered by police near Bangalore. — AFP photo

Sivarasan, Subha suicides upset Rajiv murder probe

NEW DELHI, Aug 20: Indian detectives probing the assassination of former Premier Rajiv Gandhi's assassination said today that the suicides of two prime suspects had upset investigations, reports AP.

A source in the Special Investigating Team (SIT), hunting for several other members of Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), said a crack-down on the rebels was likely to be hampered.

"They will now go into deep cover," said the SIT source by telephone from Madras, adding that the capture of the two prime suspects would have expedited their search for other senior LTTE guerrillas in Tamil Nadu.

The LTTE is suspected of engineering the May 21 slaying of Gandhi in the southern town of Sriperumpudur and the SIT is presently directing a crack-down on the group from the state capital of Madras.

"Our last link may have been broken," said the SIT source referring to today's suicide by the LTTE's intelligence chief Sivarasan and his woman associate, Subha, along with five others in the adjoining state of Karnataka.

Sivarasan was accused of having plotted the Gandhi assassination and died in the climax to one of India's biggest manhunt when he was trapped in a house with the other armed guerrillas.

Their arrest alive would also have helped put the LTTE's involvement in the plot beyond doubt.

"There are many missing pieces and had we taken him (Sivarasan) alive we may have succeeded in arresting many LTTE men and their local collaborators," the SIT source said.

"We've got to get the other names..... now we've got to make plans," he said referring to the police crackdown in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on the intricate net work set up over the past 10 years by the LTTE.

The SIT has so far arrested more than 20 LTTE rebels and their Indian collaborators in connection with Gandhi's assassination, and two others suspected of direct links to the plot have committed suicide.

Fourteen LTTE members have died after swallowing cyanide since Saturday in Karnataka to escape capture. Related story on page 5

Credit facilities to defaulters hailed

Star Economic Report

Trade and business circles in Dhaka welcomed the government decision to relax restrictions on the credit facilities to the defaulting loanees.

A revised circular issued by the Banking Control Department (BCD) of the Bangladesh Bank on Sunday relaxed some restrictions and conditionalities on offering new loans to the defaulting loanees and in some cases, a number of restrictions were withdrawn.

The new initiative has been viewed as a positive gesture towards a healthy growth of trade and commerce in the country by the business and industry circles.

Some traders have viewed that renewal of bank credit should be handled by the same bank from which the borrower took loans earlier. The revised circular says a defaulting loanee, if he is not a habitual defaulter, should ask for fresh loan from the commercial banks except the bank from which he had taken loan and became a defaulter.

The Bangladesh Bank circular said that renewal of credit facilities would be extended to those who could come to an amicable settlement with the banks concerned on repayment of their loans. Such facilities will remain valid for three months, the circular says. The three months will be counted from the date of renewal of the credit. The credit facilities would be given on condition that the loanee had reached amicable settlements with the bank where he had been a defaulter and he would also give a guarantee to this effect.

The concerned banks will also see whether the directors of the defaulting companies or firms have given personal guarantee about their loans. The BCD circular says, in such cases, the banks will issue notices to the concerned director or directors about repayment of their loans and if necessary, those guarantees could be invoked.

The bank would identify the correct situation through exchange of information mutually as per Clause 119 of the Banking Company Act, the directive says.

Ershad

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could continue in the absence of the accused.

Attorney General cited the rules 540 (A) and 339 (B) Clause 2 of the Criminal Procedure, which provides that the accused can be tried in absentia. He said, during the rule of Ershad an ailing accused used to be brought to the court in a stretcher.

He said the Rule 339 (B), Clause 2, providing for trial of an accused in absentia was enacted during the regime of Ershad on August 21, 1982.

Opposing him, chief defence counsel Advocate Sirajul Haque said, in this case the accused was in the custody of the government, which had failed to produce the accused, and as such hearing could not continue.

After hearing both sides, Special Judge Mohammad Ali Khan adjourned the court till August 25.

US visa

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he added.

The source did not give further detail saying "you will know everything from our information service later."

Under the OP-1 Programme 20,000 people were selected by lottery from all over the world for migration in America during 1990 and 1991.

From Bangladesh 4,974 people were selected and their dependents were also supposed to go with them.

The programme was scheduled to be completed by September 30, the sources said.

It is learnt that due to the early closure of the programme, some of the selected Bangladeshis would fail to avail the chance of migrating to the United States.

VCs demand

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was attended among others by Dr Mohammad Shahjahan of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Prof Maniruzzaman Miah of Dhaka University, Prof Amanullah Ahmed of Rajshahi University, Prof Asadur Rahman of Agricultural University, Kazi Saleh Ahmed of Jahangirnagar University, Prof Abdul Hamid of Islamic University and Dr Golam Rahman of Khulna University.

The meeting felt that stopping further closure of the universities lay with the government, political parties and the student organisations.

It hoped that the law-enforcing agencies would be active in ensuring security on the campuses.

The meeting also hoped that the newspapers and other mass medias would project news about educational institutions considering their effect on the situations.

The Midnight File

Govt employees urged to abide by conduct rules

The government Tuesday called on its employees to attend their respective offices punctually and adhere to Government Servants Conduct Rules from Wednesday. On the background of announcing new pay scales for the government officers and employees the government in a Press Note said it was not possible to ensure economic solvency without putting in extra work and increasing production in an impoverished nation like ours, reports BSS.

Mortar shells rain down on Croatia shattering truce

BELOGRADE, Aug 20: Mortar shells rained down on a major Croatian town Tuesday, shattering a fragile truce in the rebel republic as Yugoslav leaders resumed talks on the country's future. Ten were reported killed across Croatia. An official at Croatia's Interior Ministry said the center of Osijek — the provincial capital of the strife-torn Slavonia region came under heavy mortar bombardment and gunfire overnight, reports AP.

Hurricane Bob sweeps eastern Canada

BOSTON, Aug 20: The remnants of Hurricane Bob swept eastern Canada Tuesday after the storm tossed boats around and tore off roofs in a race up the Eastern Seaboard. Nine deaths were blamed on the season's first Atlantic hurricane. The hurricane, the first to hit the Northeast since Gloria in 1985, knocked out power to an estimated 2.1 million businesses and households, utilities said, reports AP.

Indian envoy to Romania shot and wounded

BUCHAREST, Aug 20: India's ambassador to Romania was shot and wounded by four armed men Tuesday evening, the state news agency Rompres and the Indian Embassy reported. Ambassador Julio Francis Ribeiro was hit in the leg and was "safe" in a local hospital, sources in the Indian Embassy said, reports AP.

Poll expenses control law made stricter

The relevant sections of the Representation of the People Order 1972 have recently been amended to control the election expenses of the contesting candidates for election to Jatiya Sangsad more stringently, an Election Commission press release said Tuesday, reports BSS.

As per provision of Clause (3) of Section 44B of the said order, the election expenses of a contesting candidate excluding the personal expenditure, which is Taka five thousand incurred by such candidate shall not exceed Taka three lakh.

- According to the recent amendment, no contesting candidate for election to Jatiya Sangsad will be allowed to utilise the amount of Taka three lakh or any portion thereof authorised for his election expenses for:
- A. Printing of a poster with more than one colour,
 - B. Use of any imported paper for printing of posters or leaflets,
 - C. Erection of any gate or arch,
 - D. Setting up a pandal covering an area of more than four hundred square feet,
 - E. Making any banner by using any cloth,
 - F. Employing or using more than three microphones or loudspeakers at a time in a constituency,
 - G. Commencing election publicity in any manner at any time three weeks prior to the date fixed for the poll.

- H. Setting up more than 20 election camps or offices in a constituency.
- I. Using any vehicle or vessel such as truck, bus, car, taxi, motor cycle and speed-boat for taking out any procession,
- J. Illumination by use of electricity in any form,
- K. Using symbol or portrait of a candidate with more than one colour,
- L. Display of a symbol exceeding the size prescribed by the Election Commission. The Election Commission has fixed the size for display of an election symbol to be not more than five metres in length, breadth and height.

A person shall be guilty of corrupt practice under Section 73 of the Representation of the People Order 1972, which is punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years and shall not be less than two years and also with fine, if he contravenes the above provisions of law, the press release said.

Chinese team leaves Dhaka

Special envoy of China and vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Madame Chen Muhua and the members of her delegation left Dhaka Tuesday for Beijing after ending her four-day official visit, reports BSS.

Nominations

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Jatiya Party filed nomination papers. A total of seven candidates submitted their nomination papers for the seat.

Four candidates filed nomination papers for the Rangpur-5 seat. The candidates include Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury of the Jatiya Party, Ashiqur Rahman of the AL and Nurul Huda Sultan of the BNP.

For the Rangpur-6 constituency, seven candidates including Shah Moazzem Hussain of the JP, Mattur Rahman of the AL and Shah Md Abu Saleq of the BNP filed nomination papers.

Four candidates filed nomination papers for the Madaripur-1 seat. The candidates include Motahar Hussain Chowdhury of the BNP and Nur Alam Chowdhury of the AL.

For the Madaripur-2 seat, ten candidates filed nomination papers yesterday. Shahjahan Khan of the AL and Atiqur Rahman of the BNP were among the candidates.

Only three candidates have submitted nomination papers for the Dhola-2 seat. The candidates include Anwar Hussain of the AL and Mosharrat Hussain Shahjahan of the BNP.

For the Bogra-7 seat, Helaluzzaman of the BNP and Azam Khan of the AL filed nomination papers. A total of five candidates are there for the seat.

Seven candidates filed nominations for the Chittagong-8 constituency. The candidates include Amir Khasru of the BNP and Abdul Mannan of the AL.

Scrutiny of the nomination papers will be held today (Wednesday). The last date for withdrawal of candidature is August 26 and polling will be held on September 11.