

International

Vajpayee, Clinton to discuss Kashmir

WASHINGTON, Sept 13: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and President Bill Clinton will steer carefully around prickly issues like Kashmir and nuclear weapons when they meet this week to consolidate improving Indo-US relations, reports Reuters.

Vajpayee's state visit to Washington includes a speech to both houses of Congress tomorrow, meetings with Clinton and Vice President Al Gore on Friday and a state dinner at the White House on Sunday evening.

The visit, following Vajpayee's attendance at last week's Millennium Summit at the United Nations in New York, is seen by both sides as the next step in an initiative to build a special relationship started by Clinton's visit to India in March.

This second summit in six months "underlines the establishment of a new level of engagement," said Kanti Bajpai an associate professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi now on a fellowship with a Washington think tank.

Murders spark violence in Karachi

KARACHI, Sept 13: Two members of a political group were killed in a drive-by shooting, touching of angry street protests Wednesday that closed shops and left burned-out buses in the streets, reports AP.

Rashid Anwer and Munir Ahmed, members of Mohajir Qaumi Movement, were killed when their car was ambushed in the predawn hours Wednesday by unidentified gunmen riding on a motorbike in central Karachi, police said.

The killing triggered widespread violence as the MQM supporters attacked public buses and fired in the air. At least three buses were set ablaze in the eastern part of Karachi, the country's largest city.

Shops and business were shut Wednesday in many parts of the city. Paramilitary troops with machine guns mounted on trucks, patrolled the streets.

Karachi was plagued by faction fighting during much of the 1990s, but Wednesday's shooting was the most serious outbreak of political violence since the military seized power in October last year.

MQM has been locked in fierce political feud with the rival Muttahida Qaumi Movement. Both groups represent Muslims who have migrated from India and their descendants.

Trial in biggest corruption scandal opens in China

XIAMEN, China, Sept 13: Trials in the biggest corruption scandal in communist China's history opened today with senior officials facing the death penalty for taking bribes and kickbacks in a multi-billion dollar smuggling scam, reports AFP.

Court officials in the coastal cities of Xiamen, Fuzhou, Quanzhou, Putian and Zhangzhou in the southern province of Fujian confirmed to AFP that trials linked to the scandal had opened.

But a veil of secrecy has been drawn over proceedings and officials declined to give details about defendants or charges, and they also declined to say exactly how many people would face trial.

Police clamped a ring of steel around the Xiamen People's Intermediate Court, blocking all roads around the building and turning away anyone without an official pass.

The scandal is centred around the Hong Kong-based YanHua (Farwell) Group which allegedly operated a smuggling web out of the bustling port of Xiamen by greasing the palms of police, customs and Communist Party officials.

YanHua run by businessman Lai Changqing, is alleged to have smuggled more than 10 billion dollars worth of diesel fuel, tobacco, cigarettes, rubber and other products over a decade.

Hong Kong press reports have implicated between 200 and 600 government officials including the families of some of China's most senior leaders.

President Jiang Zemin has ordered an all-out war on rampant corruption within the Communist Party and in the latest high-profile case Cheng Kejie, a vice chairman of parliament, was sentenced to death in

July for taking nearly five million dollars in bribes.

However critics say Jiang has stopped investigations reaching into the top echelon of the party and the most senior officials linked to the Xiamen scam are not expected to stand trial.

Among them are politburo member and Beijing Communist Party chief Jia Qingling, former vice minister of public security Li Jizhou and General Ji Shengde, former head of military intelligence.

The Beijing Youth Daily said this week around 10 officials will be sentenced to death for accepting five million yuan (602,000 dollars) in bribes.

Previous media reports have said at least four officials will face the death penalty for receiving bribes exceeding 12 million dollars. They include former Xiamen customs head Yang Qianxian and former provincial deputy director of police Zhuang Rushun.

Also allegedly implicated are the deputy head of Xiamen's public security department, the head of state security in Xiamen and the city's deputy Communist Party secretary.

However two of the alleged prime movers fled the country as the scandal unfurled -- Xiamen vice mayor Lan Fu reportedly made it to Australia while Hong Kong press reports have put YuanHua owner Lai in Myanmar and Canada.

Xiamen's new vice mayor Chen Conghui declined to give details of the trials, but insisted the city was shaking off its reputation as a filthy pit of corruption.

"One thing I would like to stress is that Xiamen is not relying on smuggling to get rich," he told AFP.



Residents gather in front of the court gate in Xiamen city of Fujian province yesterday. The biggest corruption trial in Communist China's history opened in five cities yesterday with a host of officials facing the death penalty for their role in a multi-billion dollar web of kickbacks and smuggling.

--AFP photo

Huge explosion rocks stock exchange in Jakarta

JAKARTA, Sept 13: A huge explosion rocked Jakarta's stock exchange today, injuring at least 27 people and leaving several trapped in an underground parking lot, officials and witnesses said, reports AFP.

A local radio report that one person had died in the blast in the high-rise exchange building could not immediately be confirmed.

Deputy police spokesman Senior Superintendent Saleh Saifi initially told AFP that the explosion was caused by a bomb but later said: "We are not sure, we are still checking."

"We don't know if it was a bomb, or a gas explosion or connected to the power generator," he said.

An emergency ward nurse at the Indonesian capital's Pertamina hospital said the hospital had received no fatalities. Twenty-seven people had been

treated for injuries, she said.

ANT television station said an unknown number of people were trapped in the second floor of an underground parking lot.

"One of my colleagues (a security officer) is still trapped in the second level of parking," Ahmad Nur Hasan, a fire control officer for the Maxxus oil company, told an AFP reporter at the scene.

"When I spoke to him last at 4:00 p.m. (1500 BST) he was still coughing from the smoke and could not talk to me," Hasan said.

The AFP reporter saw a huge column of black smoke rising from the front facade of the building, whose power had been cut off.

Hundreds of employees who had fled the building in panic were milling around in the streets outside.

Firemen were on the scene.

The South Jakarta fire brigade said it has deployed 10 fire

engines and the Central Jakarta brigade has sent another two to the site of the blast.

Second Sergeant Yudha of the Jakarta police said a generator unit in front of the multi-storey building in central Jakarta had exploded.

But senior police spokesman Superintendent Nur Usman said the blast had taken place in the second tier of the underground parking lots.

No warning had been received of the blast, he said, adding that he had no reports of deaths. "No one was killed," he said.

The Sunatnet online news service said the explosion at 3:30 p.m. (1430 BST), half an hour before the close of trading, was heard several kilometres away, and another online service Koridor.com said scores of ears had been burned.



Hillary wins primary

NEW YORK, Sept 13: Hillary Rodham Clinton made history Tuesday, becoming the only first lady ever to win an election as she dominated a Democratic party primary for US Senate against a little-known New York City doctor, reports AP.

While Hillary's run for the Senate has attracted national attention since early last year, the primary had gone virtually unnoticed even in New York state. Nonetheless, the results were being monitored for possible signs of Democratic dissatisfaction with the first lady's candidacy.

Going into the contest, independent polls had shown Dr Mark McMahon's support hovering around the 15 per cent mark. Analysts said the results were of little concern for the Clinton camp unless McMahon took a quarter to a third of the vote or more.

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Separately, the two Koreas are expected to hold a meeting of defense ministers, the first such meeting, to discuss tension-easing measures late this month or early next month in Hong Kong, Yonhap said, citing government officials it did not identify.

Seoul officials were not immediately available for comment. But they had earlier said Kim Jong Il was expected to visit South Korea by next spring, at the latest.

Kim Jong Sun flew direct to Seoul on Monday from the North Korean capital of Pyongyang for a four-day visit to South Korea to discuss Kim Jong Il's visit and other issues.

On Tuesday, he flew to Cheju

Pakistan has enough N-bombs to destroy Indian cities

ISLAMABAD, Sept 13: Pakistan has enough nuclear bombs and missiles to destroy Indian cities several times over, newspaper reports quoted the country's leading nuclear scientist today as saying, reports AFP.

India should never underestimate Pakistani strength under any "vain imagination," Abdul Qadeer Khan said during a speech at a science awards distribution ceremony here late Tuesday, the Jang daily reported.

"We have enough (nuclear) strength, bombs and missiles, to destroy Indian cities three times," it quoted the scientist, known as father of the Pakistani bomb, as saying.

Khan's remarks, frontpaged by various Urdu language dailies, came amid simmering tensions between Pakistan and India over Kashmir, the Himalayan territory divided between the two and claimed by both.

Pakistan conducted nuclear weapons tests in May 1998 in a

matching response to Indian tests in the same month. The two countries have also developed an array of missiles.

Khan said the nuclear capability had given the nation self-confidence and ability to defend itself against any aggression.

The Kashmir quarrel has caused two of the three wars between Pakistan and India and a conflict in Kargil area along the disputed border last year had brought them dangerously close to another all-out war.

India, blaming Islamabad for fomenting an ongoing Muslim secessionist revolt in its zone of Kashmir, has rebuffed Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf's repeated offers of peace talks.

Islamabad has said it only gives moral, diplomatic and political support to the separatist drive it describes as a legitimate indigenous Kashmiri struggle for self-determination.

Vajpayee to undergo knee surgery

NEW YORK, Sept 13: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has been advised to undergo a knee replacement surgery by a renowned orthopaedic surgeon who examined him here, reports PTI.

The surgery on the left knee will be done in India by Dr Chittaranjan Ranawat at a date to be decided after Vajpayee returns home from his trip to the US, it was officially announced yesterday.

Dr Ranawat, director, orthopaedic surgery at the Centre for Total Joint Replacement, New York, examined Vajpayee on the evening of September 11. After a detailed examination, he advised the prime minister to undergo knee replacement surgery for the left knee. The prime minister has accepted the advice, prime minister's media adviser HK Dua said in a statement read out to the media.

Kuwaiti mother, four daughters killed in car crash

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 13: A Kuwaiti mother and her four daughters were crushed to death when their car hit a bus parked on a dark street, newspapers reported today, says AFP.

A fifth daughter and a son were admitted to hospital in critical condition, Al-Rai Al-Aam daily said.

The mother, Eiman Hamad al-Ansari, 35, was driving in a new suburb, 15 km south of Kuwait City, where street lights are not yet installed.

N Korean leader to visit S Korea

SEOUL, Sept 13: Top officials of the two Koreas have agreed that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il reportedly wants to visit during his planned South Korea trip.

The agreement was reached late Tuesday by Kim Jong Sun, a visiting special envoy of the North Korean leader, and his South Korean counterpart, Lim Dong-won, Yonhap news agency said.

Separately, the two Koreas are expected to hold a meeting of defense ministers, the first such meeting, to discuss tension-easing measures late this month or early next month in Hong Kong, Yonhap said, citing government officials it did not identify.

Seoul officials were not immediately available for comment. But they had earlier said Kim Jong Il was expected to visit South Korea by next spring, at the latest.

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Public Works Timber Workshop Division

Mirpur, Dhaka

Tender Invitation Notice

Memo No. TWD/26/659

Dated: 4-9-2000/20-5-1407 BS

1. Tender Invitation Notice No 28/2000-2001
2. Tenders on item rate basis through Bangladesh Form No 2908 under sealed cover are hereby invited from Public Works Directorate's 1st/2nd & 3rd class E/M contractors having VAT department's registration certificate for the undermentioned work. Tenders will be received in tender box kept at the office of the undersigned as well as Public Works E/M Division-1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/E/M Workshop Division & Public Works Eden Building Division, Dhaka office as per the undermentioned date & time and opened on the same day at 12:15 min in presence (if any) of the tenderers.
3. Name of work : Supply of 3/4" thick TC veneered parquet.
4. Estimated cost : At the rate 2% of the amount quoted by the contractor.
5. Earnest money : At the rate 2% of the amount quoted by the contractor.
6. Time for completion of work : 15(fifteen) days.
7. Last date of selling tender : 27-9-2000 (during office hours).
8. Last date of receiving tender : 28-9-2000 (up to 12:00 Noon)
9. Rate should be quoted on items of schedule basis distinctly in figures & words. It may be noted that not more than two digits should be used after point.
10. Earnest money must be submitted with the tender in any scheduled bank's BD/PO/CD/SDR/Pratirakha Sanchaya patra etc in favour of Executive Engineer, Public Works Timber Workshop Division, Dhaka, without which tender will be treated as cancelled.
11. Schedule of work, rules & regulations or contract etc. can be seen & purchased on cash payment of Tk 410/- only (non-refundable) from the office of the undersigned as well as Executive Engineer, Public Works E/M Division-1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/E/M Workshop Division & Public Works Eden Building Division, Dhaka office up to the last date of selling tender. Contractor himself or his authorised representative can purchase the tender form on production of registration book with requisite papers.
12. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Public Works Timber Workshop Division Mirpur, Dhaka

Tender Invitation Notice

Memo No. TWD/26/658

Dated: 4-9-2000/20-5-1407 BS

1. Tender Invitation Notice No 29/2000-2001
2. Tenders on item rate basis through Bangladesh Form No 2911 under sealed cover are hereby invited from Public Works Directorate's 1st/2nd class E/M contractors having VAT department's registration certificate for the undermentioned work. Tenders will be received in tender box kept at the office of the undersigned as well as Public Works E/M Division-1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/E/M Workshop Division & Public Works Eden Building Division, Dhaka office as per the undermentioned date & time and opened on the same day at 12:15 min in presence (if any) of the tenderers.
3. Name of work : Repair of various kinds wooden & steel furnitures.
4. Estimated cost : At the rate 2% of the amount quoted by the contractor.
5. Earnest money : 25 (twenty five) days.
6. Time for completion of work : 27-9-2000 (during office hours).
7. Last date of selling tender : 27-9-2000 (up to 12:00 Noon).
8. Last date of receiving tender : 28-9-2000 (up to 12:00 Noon).
9. Rate should be quoted on items of schedule basis distinctly in figures & words. It may be noted that not more than two digits should be used after point.
10. Earnest money must be submitted with the tender in any scheduled bank's BD/PO/CD/SDR/Pratirakha Sanchaya patra etc in favour of Executive Engineer, Public Works Timber Workshop Division, Dhaka; without which tender will be treated as cancelled.
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