

China asks US to stay out of Tibet issue

REUTERS, Beijing

China signalled on Thursday it would continue to refuse to deal with a US special coordinator for Tibet, despite apparent US plans to appoint the highest-ranking official ever to the post.

"This is the third time the US government has appointed a so-called coordinator for Tibet," Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi said in response to reports that the Bush administration was set to name a senior State Department official to the position.

"Tibet is an inseparable part of Chinese territory and a purely internal affair of China's in which no country has the right to interfere," he told a news conference.

"We call on the US government to acknowledge that Tibet is a part of China, stop supporting Tibet independence activists and stop using the Tibet issue to interfere in China's internal affairs," he said.

US congressional sources told Reuters on Wednesday the administration was likely to name Undersecretary of State Paula Dobriansky its special coordinator for Tibet. It was unclear when Dobriansky's appointment might be formally announced.

Dobriansky, who handles global affairs, is viewed as one of the more conservative members of the State Department hierarchy and one very sympathetic to Tibetans.

China's suppression of Tibetan nationalism has made the fate of the Himalayan region a deeply emotive issue in the United States, where the Dalai Lama the Tibetan spiritual

Heat wave kills 25 Afghan children at Pak refugee camp

REUTERS, Islamabad

A heat wave has killed more than 25 Afghan children at an overcrowded makeshift refugee camp in north-western Pakistan over the past two weeks, the UN refugee agency UNHCR said yesterday.

A spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Yusuf Hassan, said the children were among a total of 29 Afghans who died since May 1 at Jallozai camp, where an estimated 70,000 Afghans who fled war and drought in their country have been camping since mid-January.

"In the past two weeks, as summer temperature soared above 45 degrees Celsius, more than 25 children have died of heatstroke and dehydration," he said in a briefing note.

Hassan said the UNHCR and its partners had intensified efforts to improve health and sanitary conditions at the squalid camp near Peshawar, capital of the North West Frontier Province bordering Afghanistan.

But he said the UNHCR was "very concerned" about the plight of Afghans living at Jallozai, which has been at the centre of an unresolved row between the UNHCR and Pakistani authorities over how to deal with the Afghans.

PCP founding anniversary tomorrow

Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) will celebrate its 12th founding anniversary and hold a conference tomorrow.

Language veteran Abdul Matin will inaugurate the conference at Aparajeyo Bangla on the Dhaka University at 9:30 am. After the inauguration, a colourful procession will be brought out.

To mark the occasion, PCP will also organise a discussion at TSC auditorium of Dhaka University at 4 pm. Noted writer Badruddin Umar, Khaleduzzaman, Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Tasnim Arefa Siddiqui, Anil Chakma and Kobra Chakma will take part in the discussion.

Debate contest

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slogan of the event.

Meanwhile, finalist Jagannath Hall beat Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitree Hall at the first semi-final yesterday on the topic "South Asia is taking towards an expanding nuclear doom". Sumon Dhar of the winning team was elected the best speaker.

On the second semi-final on the topic "Under the mask of democracy, most of the countries are pursuing state-sponsored terrorism", Rokeya Hall won against Bangabandhu Hall with Sabrina M Shaili being adjudged the best debater of this session.

Dumb girl

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under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code, sources said.

When the girl was produced in a magistrate's court, police were asked to find out her parents and hand her over to them. But they could not collect any information about the girl and her parents.

She was then sent to Narayanganj jail on June 7 and later shifted to the central jail in the city.

Shipu murder: No headway

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Investigation officer of the case DB inspector Rezaul Karim, however, did not mention any of them as principal accused.

Some sources said Jewel is now staying in Canada. He left for Canada from an Indian airport while Zubair left Dhaka from Zia International Airport and is now staying in Italy. Alim is now working at a hotel in Kolkata.

Police sources believe that being a high official of CAAB, Zubair's father helped his son and the two others flee the country.

Police said that they could not arrest the three as they left the country after the killing. A DB team went to India to arrest the accused but they escaped.

About six months before Shipu

was murdered, Zubair and Shafail allegedly gunned down a young man named Raju in Banani bazaar area. Despite clear evidence against the two, they were not arrested, local people said.

Documents of Shipu murder case were sent to the office of the DC of Dhaka for publishing notification about the abductors several months ago but no step has been taken as yet in this regard, family members alleged.

Shipu has a four-year-old daughter, Zaina and a two-year-old son, Zarif. Family members said although Zarif is too little to understand what happened with his father, Zaina frequently asks questions about him. "We are worried about the girl," her uncle said.

3 cinemas fined

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appeared before the hearing on behalf of Senakunja, but the customs authorities did not accept his arguments. The representative said they were communicating with the higher authorities for the matter.

The chairman reminded them that all commercially operating establishments must pay the government supplementary duty and value-added tax.

The defence secretary sent a letter to headquarters of the three services for taking proper actions against tax evasion.

But the authorities of those centres remained silent. The Daily Star correspondent also tried to talk to some army officers concerned, but they declined to make any comment on the issue.

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NB Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan also wrote letters to the defence and home secretaries asking them to take actions for payment of duties and taxes.

Criticising the faulty city plans taken by different organisations of the government in the past for the development of the city which ultimately compounded the problems, the open dialogue demanded that a uniform plan be prepared by all the organisations of the government to save the city immediately. The villages of the area along the three rivers should carry on a social movement till the pollution of the three rivers is checked.

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PHOTO: STAR
Workers brought out some of the stock materials in a bid to save them after a fire broke out at the New Fashion Garments at Pallabi in Mirpur yesterday.

Suicide bombing: Six killed

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thought the floor was about to fall from under me. Everyone ran and there was hysteria ... Then I saw the awful scene. Everything was broken, and I saw all the injured," she said.

Sirens wailed as ambulances and police cars raced to the scene. Rescuers treated some of the wounded on the street, while one of the dead was sprawled face-down on the pavement, surrounded by debris.

One witness, who only gave her first name, Shiblet, said that just before the explosion, she saw a young man, apparently an Arab, wearing an oversized blue sports coat. She said she became suspicious and called police, but that the bomb went off before the officers arrived.

Other witnesses said the bomber tried to get into the mall but was stopped by a security guard, who

pushed him back. The bomber then detonated his explosives and the security guard was among the injured.

Hamas identified the suicide bomber as Mahmoud Ahmed Marmash, 20, from the West Bank town of Tulkarem.

In the West Bank town of Ramallah, Hamas preacher Hassan Yousef announced the name over mosque loudspeakers yesterday, afternoon prayers. Yousef said the blast came in retaliation for the killing of five Palestinian policemen by Israeli security forces earlier this week. At the main Ramallah mosque, Hamas activists distributed sweets to worshippers after prayers to celebrate the bombing.

Hamas leader Ahmed Yassin said Israel was the aggressor. "Israel planted the violence by killing innocent people," he said. "Now Israel is harvesting the reaction."

Israel has held Yasser Arafat and his Palestinian Authority responsible for bombing attacks, saying the Palestinian leader freed militants from prison after the fighting began last fall and has not reined in militant groups.

Netanya, 35 kilometers north of Tel Aviv, has been the scene of several bomb attacks by Palestinian militants in the past several months.

The city is just 10 kilometers from the West Bank. Israel bars most Palestinians from crossing into Israel from the West Bank, but the border is not fenced and can be easily crossed on foot.

At the time of the explosion, the mall was crowded with shoppers at midday as Israelis prepared for the Jewish Sabbath, which begins at sundown. After the explosion, police cleared people out of the mall and closed off the area.

Buddhadev sworn in

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Ministry and be satisfied with only the Transport Ministry, sources concerned said.

The Raj Bhavan function was attended by over 2,000 dignitaries. Jyoti Basu was looking a bit relaxed at the function.

There were persons like Aziz Premji, owner of Wipro, the Goenka Brothers, Harsh and Sanjeev and some other industrialists in the state.

Chairman of Trinamool Congress Ajit Panja exchanged pleasantries with Bhattacharya, his wife, daughter and mother.

However, newly elected Congress MLAs were not seen. It was not known whether they had boycotted the swearing-in ceremony.

Bhattacharya is the sixth Chief Minister of the state. His predecessors are Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, Ajoy Mukherjee, Prafulla Sen, Siddhartha Shankar Ray and Jyoti Basu.

Dr. Roy had started the agricultural revolution in West Bengal. It remains to be seen whether Bhattacharya can materialise his dream of an industrial revolution in the state.

AFP adds from Kolkata: Veteran Marxist leaders Harkishen Singh Surjeet, also the general secretary of the CPI-M, Prakash Karat and Somnath Chatterjee were among the dignitaries at the Raj Bhavan function.

Experts fear a dengue epidemic this year in the port city and its surrounding areas. Stagnant water in those areas will enliven the larvae left last year by Aedes mosquito. The larvae, if not destroyed, survives at least for one year, they said.

"We need a serious drive to destroy the larvae in all breeding places" said an expert.

CCC sources said plan is underway to step up its anti-mosquito drive.

Illegal immigrants

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Kenney proposed creating the Office for New Philadelphians a privately financed agency possibly stationed in City Hall which would encourage new immigrants to move to the city, and then provide assistance, including English-language lessons, translation of city reports and referrals.

Kenney, who said it likely wouldn't require City Council legislation, said he hopes the office will be running by the end of the year.

4 BNP men shot during clash with police in Pabna

UNB, Pabna

Four BNP activists were shot during a clash with police in Santhia town yesterday.

Witnesses said the clash erupted when police arrested local BNP leader Shamsur Rahman from a party procession in front of Santhia thana at about 5.15 pm.

Police said they were forced to open fire as the BNP activists tried to snatch away Shamsur Rahman.

Police arrested two BNP activists Fazlul Haque and Khoka from the spot.

Three of the wounded were admitted to Pabna General Hospital and another to a local clinic.

Four killed in Turkish plane crash

AFP, Ankara

All four crewmen died when a Turkish military cargo plane crashed just after taking off on a test flight near Ankara yesterday, the second crash of one of the country's Spanish-designed CASA military craft in three days.

The aircraft, carrying two Spanish test pilots and a Spanish and a Turkish engineer, plunged to the ground shortly after take-off from the Akinilar military base near Ankara, officials said.

The accident came just as funeral ceremonies were being held across Turkey for 34 soldiers who died Wednesday when one of the same planes came down in the eastern province of Malatya in what was described as the country's worst-ever military air disaster.

They were first admitted to Manikganj Hospital and then shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

A case was filed with the police in this regard.

Malaysia to import English teachers

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Singapore, told the state Bernama news agency.

Most Malaysian children learn in the national language Bahasa Malaysia and take English as a compulsory subject. They do not need to pass an English exam to graduate.

Universities in the former British colony teach primarily in Bahasa Malaysia while the growing number of private colleges instruct mostly in English.

In November, Malaysia and other members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreed to promote English as a first or second language.

Malaysia's neighbour Singapore has embarked on its own English language programme, though with a different focus, encouraging citizens to purify their "Singlish", a mishmash of English, Malay and Chinese words and sentence structures.

Retired teachers asked to receive allocation from trust office

BSS, Dhaka

It, however, added that in case of inability to report within the next two days, the trust would send the cheques to the recipients shortly.

The release, signed by secretary of the trustee board, requested others who were yet to be listed to wait for the publication of the next list.

The organisation last month announced that it would soon disburse nearly Taka 5.40 crore to the enlisted retired teachers of private school, college and madrasahs as it finalised a list of 1,840 retired or expired teachers and employees of private educational institutions.

The trust was formed recently with Education Secretary as ex-officio chairman and chairman of the Intermediate and Higher Education Department as ex-officio vice chairman of the body. Principal of Sheikh Borhanuddin Post Graduate College Quazi Faroq has been made the secretary of the trust.

Rumsfeld mulling changes in US armed forces

AFP, Washington

having "people stay in slots a little longer and maybe to serve longer."

He said he was "pushing" to get US troops out of Bosnia because he believes the military mission there is finished.

The review of the US military, begun four months ago, will not produce results until fiscal 2002, beginning October 1 of that year, Rumsfeld said.

Criticised for the closed manner in which he is conducting the review, Rumsfeld said he would include the military and Congress in his future deliberations.

"Everyone will have a chance to participate, which they should," Rumsfeld said.

9 injured in Manikganj road accident

UNB, Manikganj

Eminent litterateurs of the country will pay homage to the Bangla language martyrs of Shilchor in Assam today through a discussion commemorating their sacrifices for establishing the right to speak in their mother tongue.

On this day in 1961 eleven people of Shilchor, the centre of Barak valley of north-eastern Indian state of Assam, embraced martyrdom and many others were injured as police opened fire on them during a non-violent movement.

Tens of thousands of people of the region joined the movement to establish Bangla as one of the state languages of Assam.