

Tibetan exiles defy Indian police ban

AFP, Dharamshala

A group of Tibetan exiles planning to march to their homeland from northern India were back on the road yesterday despite a police ban on their trek.

The 100 activists began their walk on Monday as part of pro-independence protests ahead of the Beijing Olympics. They hope the march will highlight what they say are serious human rights violations in their Himalayan homeland.

The group had walked 20 kilometres (13 miles) from Dharamshala before local police served them with a restraining order that they had received from authorities in the Indian capital.

"We will continue on our homeland march despite the order that has been served on us," said B. Tsering, head of the Tibetan Women's Association, one of five organisations sponsoring the march.

The activists said the restraining order said their protest could "culminate in endangering public tranquillity and breach of public peace."

Austrians abducted by al-Qaeda in Algeria

AFP, Algiers

Two Austrian tourists abducted by al-Qaeda's North Africa branch are in Algeria, close to the border with Tunisia, where they went missing last month, the Arabic daily Annahar reported yesterday.

"According to Algerian sources the group of kidnappers crossed the Algerian border between Tebessa and Oued Souf. A search is going on to locate and surround them so as to be able to open dialogue and negotiations," the paper said.

The report could not be officially confirmed.

On Monday, a spokesman for the "Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb" -- the local franchise of the global jihadi front -- said it had abducted the pair on February 22 and warned western tourists to stay away from Tunisia.

Austrian press reports have named the missing pair as Wolfgang Ebner and Andrea Klobner.

According to the Austrian foreign ministry the man, aged 51, and the woman, in her forties, were last heard of in mid-February from the village of Matmata in southern Tunisia.

Anwar says opposition is 'government in waiting'



Former deputy prime minister and de facto opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim (R) addresses journalists as People's Justice Party deputy leader Syed Husin Ali (L) looks on during a press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian opposition figurehead Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday that the three parties he rallied to stunning election results were a "government in waiting".

Anwar, a former deputy premier who has made a spectacular political comeback after being sacked and jailed a decade ago, said he is in no hurry to return to parliament when a ban on his taking public office expires next month.

"I have not dealt with this issue yet. My priority now is to assist and help the state governments to estab-

lish themselves," he said, after the opposition took four states from the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition in Saturday polls.

"I will attend parliament. But I will be in the public gallery.

He laughed off a question about whether he saw himself as a future prime minister, but he made his ambitions clear.

"I don't like the term 'opposition head'. We are the government in waiting," he told a press conference.

Anwar has previously said he will return to parliament through a by-election in a seat held by his

Keadilan party after April, when the ban related to a corruption conviction expires.

Sitting on the opposition benches will be Anwar's wife, Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who extended a majority in her parliamentary seat in Saturday's poll, and his daughter, Nurul Izzah Anwar, who won in her first attempt.

Anwar weathered blistering personal attacks during the campaign from Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's ruling party, which was clearly rattled as he criss-crossed the nation delivering barn-storming speeches.

35 Tigers killed in fresh Lanka fighting

AFP, Colombo

At least 30 Tamil Tiger rebels and five government troops were killed in fresh clashes yesterday across Sri Lanka's embattled north, the defence ministry said.

Pre-dawn fighting erupted in the coastal district of Mannar where the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) tried to re-take territory they lost to security forces this week, the ministry said.

The ministry said most of the rebel casualties were women fighters, though there was no immediate word from the guerrillas.

So far this year, the defence ministry has reported that security forces have killed at least 1,987 rebels while 123 government soldiers have died.

Goa leader says police to be investigated in Briton's death

AFP, Panaji

The leader of the Indian resort state of Goa promised yesterday to investigate allegations of local police incompetence made by the mother of a British teen found dead there last month.

Goa police at first said that 15-year-old Scarlett Keeling, whose bruised, partially undressed corpse was found on popular Anjuna beach just hours after she was seen at a nearby bar, had drowned.

A first autopsy found only five bruises on Keeling's body, but a second examination on Saturday discovered as many as 50, with at least half of them believed to have been inflicted before she died.

"There have been several allegations against the conduct of Anjuna police station officers," Chief Minister Digambar Kamat told AFP.

"We will look into all of them to find out whether there was a delay, mistake or laxity on the part of the officers."

One policeman, who was involved in the early stages of the investigation, has been stripped of his authority, police said Monday.

Police opened a murder investigation into Keeling's death on Sunday -- three weeks after she died.

Sharif's party vetoes Fahim's candidature

THE DAWN, Islamabad, Lahore

While the Pakistan People's Party was still undecided about its nominee for the post of prime minister, its coalition ally Pakistan Muslim League-N on Monday came out openly against the candidacy of PPP vice-chairman Makhdoom Amin Fahim because of what a PML-N leader termed his frequent contacts with President Pervez Musharraf.

PPP's Parliamentarians leader Fahim hit back at what he called a "character assassination campaign" launched by PML-N leader Khwaja Mohammad Asif, saying that he had been meeting the president on the directives of the late party leader Benazir Bhutto. He also said that PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari was aware of his meetings with Gen (ret'd) Musharraf after Bhutto's assassination.

Khwaja Asif told Dawn that the PML-N leadership had categorically told the PPP that it had serious "reservations" over the nomination of Mr Fahim for the post of prime minister "due to his constant contacts" with President Musharraf.

"We fear that he can be a proxy

of Gen (ret'd) Musharraf. The frequency of his contacts with Musharraf has increased with the passage of time and Fahim's nomination as prime minister can jeopardise PML-N's relationship with the PPP," he said.

Quoting what he called "our information," the PML-N leader alleged that Fahim had met President Musharraf even at a time when the body of Bhutto was in a hospital in Rawalpindi on Dec 27 last year. Fahim had held another meeting with the president within the next four days, he said.

Khwaja Asif said it was a matter of concern that a person was meeting President Musharraf immediately after his party's chairperson had been assassinated.

Meanwhile Makhdoom Amin Fahim says that a decision about who should be the party's candidate for the office of prime minister should be taken by the party's central executive committee, rather than by any other organisation.

Talking to Dawn on Monday, he said he had not withdrawn his candidature, despite the fact that some other party leaders were also vying for the job.

Political stability priority: Musharraf

THE DAILY TIMES, Islamabad

President Pervez Musharraf said in an interview published on Monday that political stability was his top priority and a war between the presidency and the newly elected parliament would be catastrophic.

"I'm looking forward to working with this government for the full five years," Musharraf told the Washington Times.

The president listed his three top priorities: political stability, the continuation of the country's economic development and success in the war on terrorism.

"You'll notice that I listed political stability first, because without that, you cannot have the other two," he said.

"Can you imagine what the effect would be on the business community, both foreign and domestic, or in the capitals of nations allied with us in the war on terror if the first thing they saw after this election was a political war between the presidency and the government? I think it would be catastrophic," Musharraf said.



Pakistani rescue workers remove a dead body from the badly damaged building of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) after a powerful bomb explosion in Lahore yesterday. At least 25 people were killed by two bombs that ripped through a federal police headquarters and an advertising agency in the Pakistani city of Lahore.

Malaysian opposition to demolish race policies

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's opposition was yesterday sworn in to power in Penang, one of the nation's richest states, and swiftly announced plans to dismantle controversial race-based discrimination policies.

After a stunning weekend election performance that seized a third of parliamentary seats and four new states from the ruling

coalition, an opposition figure was sworn in yesterday as chief minister in Penang.

Lim Guan Eng, head of the Democratic Action Party which is a part of a three-member opposition alliance, immediately targeted positive discrimination policies for Muslim Malays who dominate the nation's population.

"We want to run the state government administration free from

the New Economic Policy that only breeds cronyism, corruption and systematic inefficiency," he told reporters.

The New Economic Policy was introduced in the early 1970s to bridge the wealth gap with ethnic Chinese who dominate business, by giving Malays advantages in education, housing and business.

It was one of the factors behind a flight by ethnic Chinese and Indian voters in weekend polls, which deprived the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition of a two-thirds majority in parliament for the first time in four decades.

Penang, styled as Malaysia's "Silicon Valley", is Malaysia's only Chinese-majority state and is home to the manufacturing operations of electronic giants such as Intel and Sony.

The opposition, led by Anwar Ibrahim who represents the Keadilan party, also took the states of Kedah, Perak and Selangor. The Islamic party PAS already ruled Kelantan in the north.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Momentum slipping on Myanmar

AFP, Yangon

UN envoy Ibrahim Gambari's seeming failure to press the Myanmar junta toward reform has undermined the loss in diplomatic momentum since last year's bloody crackdown on protests, analysts say.

Gambari arrived in Myanmar last Thursday hoping to persuade the regime to include detained democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi in plans for a constitutional referendum in May designed to pave the way for elections in 2010.

But with support from regional allies such as China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the generals have pressed on with a "roadmap to democracy" that the West has decried as a sham.

"What the Burmese military has done is what the Chinese and ASEAN and even the Indians wanted to see in Burma -- the continuation of the roadmap, and for the first time in 20 years there is a timeframe," said Thailand-based Myanmar expert Aung Naing Oo, referring to the nation by its former name.

Gambari left Myanmar late

Monday having twice been rebuffed by the junta.

The generals refused to amend the constitution and rejected an offer of UN technical assistance and foreign observers during the referendum.

Aung Naing Oo said the split has left Myanmar holding all the cards, with the United Nations empty-handed.

"I honestly don't have any hope in the UN's intervention," he added. "The Burmese junta know they have the Chinese protecting them at the UN Security Council."

The apparent snubs to

Gambari, who was also accused on this visit of being biased in favour of the opposition. However, Zarni said, Myanmar was no longer top of the world's agenda.

The West's sanctions were simply angering the regime without affecting the top leadership, he added, while China was not keen on forcing Myanmar on to a path to democracy that they themselves did not follow.

"The only silver lining in all this is the regime is not declaring this UN engagement process, whatever it's worth, dead or unwelcome," he said.

Vacancy Announcement

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Bangladesh, invites applications from highly qualified, energetic, and experienced development professionals who want to join UNDP's dynamic working environment, for recruitment of **Public Expenditure Management Adviser (1 position) for Local Governance Support Project - Learning and Innovation Component.**

For details of the Terms of Reference and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than 25 March 2008.



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NOTICE AS PER ARTICLE NO. 209(3) OF THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF THE COMPANY FOR APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

This is for the information of all the shareholders of United Leasing Company Limited that as per our notice dated February 26, 2008, we have received the following nominations from the shareholders of the Company for appointment as auditor of United Leasing Company Limited for the year 2008 in the 19th Annual General Meeting of the Company to be held on **March 25, 2008.**

- M.J. Abedin & Co., Chartered Accountants**
National Plaza (6th floor), 1/G Free School Street
Sonargaon Road, Dhaka-1205
- Rahman Mostafa Alam & Co., Chartered Accountants**
Islam Chamber (14th floor), 125/A, Motijheel C/A
Dhaka-1000
- Syful Shamsul Alam & Co., Chartered Accountants**
15, Dilkusha C/A (6th floor), Dhaka-1000
- Habib Sarwar & Co., Chartered Accountants**
Eastern Commercial Complex, 73 Kakrail, (7th floor),
Chamber-704, Dhaka-1000

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Dated : Dhaka
March 12, 2008

COMPANY SECRETARY

DRIVING TOWARDS A NEW HORIZON



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শৌ-ক্রম : ৪ রানার মটরস লিঃ ১৯, নিউ ইস্কটন রোড, ঢাকা, ফোনঃ ৮৩৬৩৭০১, ০১৭১৪০৯৫০, এবং গাজীপুরা বাজার, ময়মনসিংহ রোড, টঙ্গী, গাজীপুর, ফোনঃ ০১৭১৩৪১৩০১

ডিলারঃ ঢাকা বিভাগঃ কৃষি সেবা মটরস, ময়মনসিংহ, ফোনঃ ০১৭১১৬৮৭১১, ০১৭১১২২৬৮২, এলিট মটরস, ঢাকা, ফোনঃ ৯৮৯৩২৮২, ০১৭১১৯০২৭৮, রাজশাহী বিভাগঃ কৃষি প্রগতি, বগুড়া, ফোনঃ ০৫১-৬৫৬৬৩, ০১৭১১৮৯০৫৪২, ধীন মটরস, নওগাঁ, ফোনঃ ০৭৪১১-৬২১৪১, ০১৭১১৮০৪১১৭, ধীন মটরস, দিনাজপুর, ফোনঃ ০১৭১৬১৭২৬৭২, রিজিয়া মটরস, পাবনা, ফোনঃ ০১৭১৪০২০১৪১, ০১৯১১৩৪৪৬৩৩, রপপুর মটরস, রংপুর, ফোনঃ ০১৭১৫৩৬১৪৪৭, ০১৭১৯০২৭০১৩, চট্টগ্রাম বিভাগঃ এলিন মটরস, চট্টগ্রাম, ফোনঃ ০৩১-৭১৫০২৪, ০১৭১১৭৯০২৭৮, এলিন মটরস, কক্সবাজার, ফোনঃ ০১৭১১৩২৮৬৭৭, ০১৭১৫৬০৯৯৮৮, এলিন মটরস, ফেনী, ফোনঃ ০১৭১৫৬০৯৯০০, ০১৭১৫৬০৯৯১১, এলিন মটরস, কুমিল্লা, ফোনঃ ০১৭১৫৬০৯৯৩৩, সিলেট বিভাগঃ বসুন্ধরা মটরস, সিলেট, ফোনঃ ০৮২১-২৮৩০১৭৫, ০১৭১১০৮০২৩৯, ইসলাম মটরস, মৌলভীবাজার, ফোনঃ ০১৭১১২০৯২৭২, ০১৭১৯০৯৫০৩৬, খুলনা ও বরিশাল বিভাগঃ ভেনাস মটরস, যশোর, ফোনঃ ০৪২১-৬৩৬৯৭, ০১৭১৪৫০৩৩৩২, মেসার্স শাহন এন্টারপ্রাইজ, খুলনা, ফোনঃ ০৪-৭২২৮৭৪, ০১৭১১৯৭১০৪০