

N Korea slams South's Lee, rebuffs his overture

THE KOREA HERALD/ ANN, Seoul

In its strongest attack yet against the new Seoul administration, North Korea yesterday for the first time directly denounced President Lee Myung-bak and blasted his key North Korean policies.

"We will have no choice but to shift our measures if the (South) continues to stomp on the North-South declarations and obey the outside forces, which will lead onto the road of confrontation," said an editorial in the Rodong Shinmun, a state-controlled newspaper.

Calling Lee a "rebel," the editorial said, "The Lee Myung-bak administration must take full responsibility for bringing about an irrecoverable catastrophic situation and damaging the peace and security of the peninsula with their pro-US and anti-North manoeuvres."

The editorial was the latest in a series of verbal and physical threats that the North has been making since last week. It was also the first time that the North Korean mouthpiece directly mentioned Lee Myung-bak, whose name appeared a total of 49 times in the editorial.

The North's recent moves appear to be not just simple provocations, but actions being taken strategically and under calculation. The North is basically pushing the new South Korean administration to return to the engagement policy of the past 10 years," said professor Kim Sung-han of Korea University.

The South Korean government had not commented on the North's latest remarks as of press deadline. The administration has maintained that its policy is to respond pragmatically and in a "low-key" manner to the North.

After expelling South Korean government officials from Gaseong industrial park Thursday, the North test-fired three short-range missiles into the West Sea. The North Korean military then demanded an apology for the comments made by Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Kim Tae-yong on North Korea's nuclear facilities. Over the weekend, the North warned of a preemptive strike, taking issue with the alleged "anti-peace" policies of the conservative Lee Myung-bak administration.

The Rodong Shinmun serves as a mouthpiece of the North Korean authorities, especially in unofficially relaying their messages to outside world. This time, the newspaper added weight to its message by attributing the editorial to a "commentator" rather than a "contributor," as was usually its practice, sources said.

Finnish FM forced out after SMS Scandal

AFP, Helsinki

Finnish Foreign Minister Ilkka Kanerva was forced to quit his job yesterday after he admitted bombarding a stripper with mobile phone text messages of a sexual nature, his party announced on Tuesday.

The conservative National Coalition Party appointed Alexander Stubb, a 40-year-old member of the European parliament, as his successor, after weeks of speculation about Kanerva's private life and his political future.

Party leader Jyrki Katainen finally withdrew his support for Kanerva on Tuesday, saying the SMS scandal had tainted the foreign minister's credibility.

Kanerva has not kept his promise to not let his private life interfere with his political life, Katainen told reporters in Helsinki.

40 protesters convicted in secret Myanmar trials: Amnesty

AFP, Bangkok

At least 40 protesters in Myanmar, including seven Buddhist monks, have been sentenced to prison after secret trials over last year's pro-democracy marches, Amnesty International said yesterday.

In September, Buddhist monks spearheaded the biggest anti-government protests in Yangon in nearly 20 years, but the military regime violently suppressed the movement by opening fire on crowds and beating people in the streets.

Officially, more than 3,000 people were arrested during the crackdown. The junta says the vast majority have been released.



Protesters hold placards in support of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) during a demonstration in Istanbul yesterday. Turkey's top court has agreed to rule on whether the governing AKP party should be banned for anti-secular activity, in a case that could threaten national stability and Ankara's bid to join the EU.

Pak cabinet announces committee on judges

THE DAILY TIMES, Islamabad

The federal cabinet in its first meeting on Monday, decided to form a committee led by the law minister to make recommendations on the restoration of sacked judges.

"The cabinet has taken this decision and a committee (headed by the law minister) will be formed in which all allied parties will give their nominations. The committee will prepare its recommendations for the restoration of judges," Information Minister Sherry Rehman told a press conference at the Prime Minister's Secretariat after the cabinet meeting.

She said another committee had also been formed to review the aboli-

tion of the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR).

When asked if the PPP-led coalition would impeach the president, Sherry avoided a direct reply and said, "We will talk about all things pertaining to the 100-day relief plan."

The minister said that she had informed the cabinet that the Information Ministry was preparing draft proposals for submission to the Law Division to revoke the amendments made to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance on November 3, 2007. She said the cabinet had also approved necessary amendments to the labour laws under which Rs 6,000 per month salary had been fixed for labour.

Tibetans planning suicide attacks

Says China

AP, Beijing

China yesterday accused "Tibet independence forces" of planning to use suicide squads to trigger bloody attacks the latest in a string of assassinations that have taken aim at supporters of the Dalai Lama.

The prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile denied the claims, saying Tibetans are committed to a "nonviolent path."

"To our knowledge, the next plan of the Tibetan independence forces is to organise suicide squads to launch violent attacks," Public Security Bureau spokesman Wu Heping said Tuesday.

"They claimed that they fear neither bloodshed nor sacrifice," Wu told news conference.

Wu offered no firm evidence to support his claims.

Beijing accuses the Dalai Lama and his supporters of orchestrating anti-government riots in Lhasa last month as part of a campaign to sabotage the August Beijing Olympics and promote Tibetan independence.

The 72-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner has denied the charge, condemning the violence and urging an independent international investigation into the unrest and its underlying causes.

Two foreign aid workers kidnapped in Somalia

AFP, Mogadishu

Two UN aid workers, a Briton and a Kenyan, were abducted by armed men Tuesday in southern Somalia, the latest in a string of attacks targeting humanitarian operations in the restive country.

"We don't have much information for the moment but what I can say is that two foreign aid workers from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) were intercepted by armed militiamen on their way to Buale," local district commissioner Ibrahim Noleye told AFP.

"We believe they are being held hostage," he added.

Local elders said the gunmen opened fire during the attack and that one of the hostages was lightly wounded.

Oldest gold artifact unearthed in Americas is 4,000 yrs old

AFP, Chicago

Archaeologists have unearthed a nearly 4,000-year-old necklace which shows that gold was being used as a status symbol in the Americas much earlier than previously thought, according to a study released Monday.

The necklace is the oldest gold artifact discovered in the Americas to date and was found in the remains of a burial site in the Lake Titicaca basin of southern Peru.

It shows that the complex social developments, which led to status displays were present while hunter-gatherers were just beginning to settle into permanent villages.

"This was a big surprise to us," said lead author Mark Aldenderfer of the University of Arizona, Tucson.



A group of Zimbabweans read a local newspaper, The Herald, looking for results of the weekend election in the Mbere suburb of Harare yesterday. Zimbabwe's opposition Movement for Democratic Change remained in the lead over President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF on Tuesday, winning more than a quarter of the parliamentary seats after weekend polls.

Zimbabwe nervously awaits vote results

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe anxiously awaited yesterday the first results from its presidential election as the opposition nosed ahead of Robert Mugabe's ruling party in the official count in the contest for parliament.

With over half of the results from 131 of the 210 constituencies announced, the Movement for Democratic Change had won 67 parliament seats while Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) trailed slightly with 64.

Despite calls from foreign governments, there was still no official word on the battle for the presi-

dency between 84-year-old Mugabe and MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai as well as long shot candidate Simba Makoni, an ex-finance minister.

The electoral commission meanwhile urged voters to remain patient, giving no word on when it would start announcing the presidential results.

Cashing in on demand for information, vendors sold copies of the state-run Herald, the country's only daily newspaper, for three times the official cover price. The front-page headline read: "ZANU-PF, MDC in tight contest".

Some voters have expressed scepticism about the parliamentary results that have so far been

released, having expected ZANU-PF to be wiped out as a backlash to the economic meltdown which has blighted the country.

The situation is slightly complicated by a split in MDC ranks, with five of the newly-elected lawmakers belonging to a faction at odds with Tsvangirai's leadership.

Based on its own calculations, the MDC is confident that it has clearly won both the presidential and parliamentary contest.

However a respected coalition of NGOs which deployed some 8,000 local election observers has projected Tsvangirai will fall just short of the votes needed to deliver a knock-out blow to Mugabe.

Two killed in militant attack in Pakistan

AFP, Mingora

Pakistani Taliban militants ambushed a van carrying pro-government tribal elders in a northwestern region, killing two tribal leaders and wounding seven others on Tuesday, police said.

The elders were returning to Mingora, the main town in the insurgency-hit Swat region, in an official van that authorities had earlier retrieved from rebels who hijacked it several months ago.

"The militants were unhappy with the efforts of the tribal elders to recover stolen official vehicles through a jirga (council)," police officer Humayun Khan said.

Police had launched a hunt for an unknown number of suspects, he added.

Swat, a picturesque valley nestled in the towering Hindu Kush mountain range, was a leading tourist spot until last year when a pro-Taliban cleric launched a campaign for Islamic Sharia law in the area.

Indian police gun down 8 Maoists

AFP, Ranchi

Police killed eight Maoist rebels in a firefight in India's eastern Jharkhand state, an official spokesman said Tuesday.

Security forces raided the Ranka forest overnight from Monday to Tuesday after receiving a tip, police spokesman Raj Kumar Mallik said.

"The security personnel rounded up the Maoist rebels and asked them to surrender. The rebels started firing, and in the gun battle eight rebels were killed," he said.

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Human Resources Division, Head Office, Dhaka

Result of the Written Test of the Candidates for the Post of Assistant Officer Grade-III

This is for information of all concerned that the following 1948 candidates for the post of Assistant Officer Grade-III have been qualified in the Written Test held on 21 March, 2008 whose Interview (Viva Voce) will be started from 12 April, 2008 at Bank's Head Office, 40 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka. Interview Cards for individual candidates are being issued mentioning date & time schedule of the Viva Voce:

01136	07393	08938	10757	12569	13867	15713	17592	18841	21499	23754	25758	27769	30098	31540	33268	34359	35974
01172	07397	08945	10758	12575	13875	15744	17600	18842	21518	23829	25781	27776	30108	31551	33281	34360	35977
01258	07445	08951	10801	12590	13891	15797	17603	18844	21588	23845	25873	27785	30111	31598	33282	34380	35980
01269	07475	08972	10807	12645	13906	15873	17617	18845	21604	23854	25947	27786	30116	31603	33283	34381	35981
01270	07488	08981	10820	12646	13922	15876	17619	18855	21608	23896	25993	27787	30126	31610	33287	34383	35987
01472	07507	08983	10860	12669	13923	15881	17629	18856	21630	23900	26000	27798	30163	31611	33307	34389	36005
01508	07508	08991	10869	12693	13924	15885	17637	18858	21642	23941	26001	27820	30171	31612	33308	34395	36011
01630	07510	09001	10883	12755	13925	15887	17654	18869	21666	23955	26003	27870	30187	31617	33314	34396	36014
02074	07528	09055	10884	12758	13942	15922	17664	18870	21672	23964	26014	27885	30204	31618	33359	34405	36021
02075	07533	09059	10885	12779	13943	15922	17666	18880	21673	24017	26017	27903	30206	31626	33375	34422	36034
01954	07540	09076	10984	12781	13946	15976	17668	18963	21703	24027	26030	27925	30209	31647	33396	34477	36035
02049	07552	09082	11008	12782	13968	15981	17681	18971	21707	24049	26036	27940	30226	31648	33421	34478	36060
02074	07600	09105	11012	12798	13969	15991	17700	18972	21714	24113	26039	28019	30245	31650	33453	34485	36065
02504	07996	09421	11627	12941	14254	15922	17713	18984	21740	24124	26046	28020	30247	31651	33454	34493	36121
02149	07714	09127	11049	13017	14002	16045	17719	18997	21777	24152	26072	28024	30262	31664	33456	34535	36125
02077	07617	09121	11021	12850	13975	16017	17721	18997	21778	24159	26087	28026	30354	31692	33477	34536	36135
02084	07664	09122	11027	12867	13980	16019	17748	18998	21778	24159	26087	28026	30354	31692	33477	34536	36135
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02121	07691	09124	11061	12911	13982	16044	17764	19054	22035	24169	26120	28038	30394	31704	33495	34547	36159
02502	07827	09291	11372	12941	14254	15922	17713	18984	21740	24124	26046	28020	30247	31651	33454	34493	36121
02163	07731	09134	11074	12925	14007	16048	17766	19056	22036	24180	26121	28042	30439	31706	33550	34561	36169
02210	07757	09134	11084	12926	14009	16112	17775	19062	22106	24228	26127	28102	30459	31706	33557	34565	36243
02224	07763	09145	11093	12929	14024	16123	17776	19100	22152	24229	26133	28110	30473	31767	33596	34600	36286
02237	07770	09148	11094	12936	14026	16144	17777	19106	22180	24237	26144	28113	30486	31791	33627	34622	36288
02249	07794	09149	11095	12937	14027	16145	17778	19107	22181	24238	26145	28114	30521	31792	33628	34623	36289
02286	07797	09180	11169	12938	14066	16174	17782	19142	22241	24262	26150	28119	30522	31793	33629	34624	36290
02297	07812	09230	11199	12966	14070	16186	17783	19159	22257	24298	26252	28161	30544	31843	33647	34684	36360
02315	07815	09234	11203	12986	14112	16275	17790	19170	22282	24326	26261	28168	30547	31865	33648	34685	36387
02394	07817	09240	11208	12988	14125	16312	17800	19261	22285	24330	26293	28175	30560	31896	33649	34689	36395
02403	07827	09241	11214	13001	14140	16313	17801	19262	22286	24331	26294	28176	30561	31897	33650	34718	36396
02560	07852	09275	11241	13002	14151	16331	17809	19275	22333	24363	26326	28206	30622	31930	33651	34719	36397
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02663	07868	09303	11282	13010	14190	16407	17828	19320	22346	24387	26381	28224	30697	31928	33660	34741	36421
02673	07884	09307	11316	13016	14205	16412	17848	19321	22363	24406	26420	28234	30703	31941	33661	34763	36444
02767	07888	09312	11344	13017	14206	16413	17849	19322	22364	24407	26421	28235	30704	31942	33662	34764	36445
02828	07889	09333	11358	13025	14240	16435	17853	19331	22377	24459	26464	28258	30715	31955	33663	34765	36446
02860	07910	09344	11359	13026	14243	16459	17865	19512	22378	24489	26466	28263	30759	31973	33670	34845	36503
02924	07949	09411	11361	13031	14244	16475	17868	19519	22380	24496	26471	28265	30771	31987	33671	34871	36505
02926	07963	09425	11368	13037	14250	16497	17878	19524	22413	24498	26480	28269	30784	31989	33672	34863	36512
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04444	08228	09774	11726	13168	14743	16773	18062	20009	22788	24809	26746	28834	30999	32221	33838	35035	36728
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