

N Korea unwilling to give up nukes: Seoul

AP, Seoul

South Korean President Lee Myung-bak said yesterday that North Korea is showing no sign of giving up nuclear weapons, although the communist regime has made recent conciliatory gestures because UN sanctions against it are working.

In a joint interview with South Korea's Yonhap news agency and Japan's Kyodo news agency, the conservative Lee also accused the North of trying to win economic aid while holding on to atomic weapons.

He urged other members of the stalled six-nation talks with North Korea to "redouble efforts" to rid the North of nuclear weapons.

Lee's remarks came as the United States is preparing to accept North Korea's offer to hold direct talks, and they underline his deep scepticism about a neighbour that is abruptly taking a softer line following nuclear and missile tests just a few months ago.

"It appears to be true that North Korea is fairly embarrassed because of greater than expected real effects" of UN sanctions, Lee said, according to a published Yonhap transcript. Lee's office confirmed its contents.

"North Korea is using some conciliatory strategy toward the United States, South Korea and

Japan in order to get out of this crisis, but for now, North Korea is not showing any sincerity or sign that it will give up nuclear weapons," he said.

North Korea pulled out of talks with the US, South Korea, China, Russia and Japan in April, protesting international criticism of its launch of a rocket that other nations suspected was a test of long-range missile technology.

In May, it conducted a nuclear test that drew tough new UN sanctions on the North's weapons exports and financial dealings. The sanctions also allow inspections of suspect North Korean cargo in ports and on the high seas.

Amid the sanctions, the North has been taking conciliatory gestures, freeing detained American and South Korean citizens and pledging to resume suspended joint projects and family reunions with South Korea.

The North also has invited Washington's special envoy on North Korea, Stephen Bosworth, to visit Pyongyang for bilateral negotiations that would be the countries' first nuclear talks since President Barack Obama took office.

Over the weekend, the State Department said the US is preparing to accept the offer, but said the talks will be part of efforts to resume the six-nation negotiations.

Tough action

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price of Tk 64, which was Tk 45 a month ago, according to TCB.

The government blamed unscrupulous traders for abnormal price hike of sugar. On the other hand, sugar refiners and traders continue to blame each other for the rise in sugar price.

The blame game is continuing but no step has so far been taken until yesterday in minimising sugar price at retail level.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan has also echoed the premier in a recent programme and said the government will take action against both dishonest TCB dealers and businessmen who hoarded sugar for getting extra profits.

In a view-exchange meeting with the dealers of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) on its premises in the capital, Faruk Khan said, "The government has an intelligence report in hand with some details about sugar hoarding."

Earlier each TCB dealer, however, was distributed one tonne of sugar and one tonne of edible oil.

The minister also announced that each TCB dealer would be given three tonnes of sugar. Presently, a total of 216 TCB dealers are selling edible oil and sugar in Dhaka City Corporation areas, whereas some 1,200 dealers are engaged outside the capital.

The minister warned the TCB dealer not to indulge in immoral practice for making some extra bucks.

"We have received some allegations against TCB dealers. If the allegations are found true the government will cancel their dealerships," he said.

The minister said two ships have already been anchored at the Chittagong Port with 50 thousand tonnes of sugar, which will go to the market before Eid. Another 50 thousand tonnes will come after Eid, he added.

Sugar swindle

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Meantime, visits to the dealers on Monday and Tuesday confirmed that none of them brought the sugar to Khagrachhari.

The 12 government-appointed dealers are M/s Khaleq Bepari, M/s Golum Muhammad Chowdhury, M/s G.N Popular Store, M/s Saidul Hoq, M/s Shahid & Brothers, M/s Gius Uddin, M/s Al Osmani Bibido Bitan, M/s Shamsul Alam, M/s Abdul Halim, M/s Hazi Muhammad Musa, M/s Mozaher and M/s Mokhtar Ahmed Enterprise.

One of the dealers Mohammad Osman admitted that they sold the sugar in front of the mill gates to avoid transportation cost.

Another dealer Mohammad Musa told The Daily Star that they had deposited Tk 1 lakh with BSFC as security money but did not get sufficient allotment. Hence, he added, they sold the sugar on the spot instead of bringing it all the way to Khagrachhari.

Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mohammad Rahed Hossain expressed his ignorance about the matter.

First bail

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of the lower court.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ehsanul Haque yesterday, after scrutinizing the bail order of the HC, asked the lawyers of the accused to furnish a bail bond.

Advocate Abdul Hannan furnished the bail bond following the order.

Amin, a third-year student of Geography and Environmental Science at Jagannath University, was arrested on May 10 for his alleged involvement in the BDR carnage of February 25-26, as he was found with a mobile phone set of a slain army officer.

Later on May 13, he made a confession statement to a magistrate saying that Sepoy Rabiul Hasan, a BDR jawan arrested in connection with the massacre, gave him the set.

A total of 1961 BDR jawans and 27 civilians have been shown arrested for their alleged involvement with the incidents.

Former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu was shown arrested in the carnage for allegedly helping the BDR mutineers flee the scene.

CID had so far taken 1666 BDR jawans and civilians on remand of whom 416 gave confession statements to magistrates on different dates.

PM warns

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4:00pm on October 4.

Sheikh Hasina, also ruling Awami League (AL) president, urged people to keep vigil against recurrence of incidents like BDR mutiny to reverse the democratic strides. She also urged the people not to be misguided by any 'false campaign'.

"While running the government and doing development works, we find continued obstacles in every step from the 'special quarter', benefited by undemocratic government, who earlier had captured power through undemocratic means. So, I urge the countrymen to be cautious so that the democratic trend continues," she told the parliament.

The prime minister was speaking at a discussion titled 'democracy and political tolerance' on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy.

Following an hour long discussion, the House passed a resolution by which Bangladesh will also observe the International Day of Democracy through holding a discussion in the parliament every year.

Inter-Parliamentary Union decided to observe September 15 of every year as International Day of Democracy in the context of a resolution adopted by the United Nations in 2007.

The International Day of Democracy was first observed in 2008 but Bangladesh could not observe the day as unelected caretaker government ruled the country during that time.

Referring to the sugar price, Sheikh Hasina told the House that a big conspiracy is going on regarding sugar price. Price of sugar is being raised though stock of sugar is available. "We are investigating the matter and action will be taken against those who are responsible for it," said the Leader of the House.

On plotting of the conspiracy, Sheikh Hasina said people who wanted to sit in power without election are still hatching conspiracy against her government.

Pointing out the two years of the past caretaker government, Hasina said, "Various formulas were floated during that time by those who would lose security money if contest an election."

She also disclosed in parliament that many proposals were given to her (Hasina) during that time including offering her the status of a prime minister without participating in elections, which she rejected.

Without mentioning any name, the prime minister said, those who wanted to capture power by creating new political parties are still continuing their activities to capture power.

"Those persons who had failed to float a new political party, exploit people, get huge interest from poor people and remain in disguise of good men wearing good dresses are still busy hatching a conspiracy

Khaleda, son

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the court to stay the proceedings against them.

The counsel in the petitions also prayed to the court to issue a rule upon the ACC and government to explain why the proceedings should not be quashed.

The petitions stated that the petitioners were not involved in any corruption and the ACC has filed the case against them without following due process of the law.

Earlier on September 7, the trial court took into cognizance the charges against Khaleda Zia, Tarique Rahman and four others in this case and fixed October 25 for its next hearing.

The court issued arrest warrants against former principal secretary DR Kamal Uddin Siddiqui and Khaleda's nephew Mominur Rahman as they have been absconding since the case was filed.

The court also said proceedings of the case against Tarique would continue in his absence since he had earlier gone to London for treatment with permission from the Supreme Court.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam told The Daily Star that his office that got copies of the petitions will fight at the court against the prayers during the hearings.

Hearing of the petitions may be held within a day or two, sources said.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director Harun-ur-Rashid filed the "Zia Orphanage Trust" fund embezzlement case against Khaleda, her son Tarique and five others on July 3 with Ramna Police Station in connection with embezzling over Tk 2.10 crore by forming the fake organisation.

Both Khaleda and Tarique earlier got bail from the HC in this case.

against the government," said Hasina, who was sent to a makeshift jail during the anti-graft drive of the past caretaker government.

She, however, hailed the caretaker regime for holding a free and fair election, which she claimed as the best election since 1973.

The AL Chief Hasina told lawmakers that the country has been pushed back economically, socially and culturally by applying the undemocratic and military rule while only a special quarter became rich but the majority people remained ignored.

The premier vowed that her government is committed to materialise all its election pledges to fulfil the desire of the people.

Hasina said her party believes in the definition of democracy given by Abraham Lincoln who said Democracy means—by the People, of the People, for the People.

"But this democracy has been absent in the country since 1975 when the military ruler grabbed power throwing an elected government," she said.

AL leaders Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Suranjit Sengupta, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Advocate Fazle Rabbi Mia, Abdul Matin Khasru, Bangladesh Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, among others, took part in the discussion.

5 housing

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must ensure wide roads, necessary infrastructure and proper drainage facility. The companies were also to make their projects environmentally sustainable.

"There were about 10 conditions, but none of the companies could meet any of the conditions. Only Eastern Housing applied for extension of timeframe, which the committee has rejected," Enamul said.

The committee also asked the Rajuk officials the reason behind approving the projects.

The Rajuk officials said they cautioned people through media not to buy plots of unapproved projects inside Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan area.

Army called

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for fifteen minutes," He added.

The daylong rainfall wreaked havoc on the traffic situation as many roads went under water due to stagnation.

Some traffic personnel said deployment of army, navy, and air force personnel would not improve the situation because the number of vehicles is more than the capacity of roads.

DMP Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque said a total of 70 persons from army, navy and air force were supposed to be deployed in accordance with the government's decision in two shifts at four points—Farmgate, Sonargaon Intersection, Maghbazar and Mohakhali. These areas have seen the highest traffic congestion in the city.

The armed forces took positions in those areas from 9:00am in addition to 2200 regular traffic policemen at 400 points in the city.

Besides, during the month of Ramadan, additional 2000 police remain in streets all day long for controlling traffic.

"The congestion problem worsens when people cross roads slowing down the vehicles and buses stop in the middle of the roads to drop and collect passengers," said traffic sergeant Nurul Abser on duty at Farmgate.

The deployment of armed forces helped improve these problems, he added.

Otter at zoo

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responsible for the incident as they draw line from the main source without any concern for the safety of animals as well as visitors.

The otter was buried behind the zoo control room at 12:00noon after its autopsy, he said.

The female partner of the otter perhaps could not recover from the shock of this tragic incident and stopped showing its acrobatic movement that used to amuse the visitors.

It was observed that electrical lines are drawn through tree branches, and at some places it remains as loose as within the visitors' reach.

Zoo sources said, "Even a gentle wind can blow the wires down."

The snapped electric wire was replaced later but kept at the same place over the cage with possibilities for further accidents.

Manmohan

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"I would like to say frankly that we have not achieved as much success as we would have liked in containing this menace," he said.

India's Maoist insurgency, which started as a peasant uprising in 1967, has spread to 20 of the country's 29 states and claimed 580 lives so far this year.

The rebels say they are fighting for the rights of neglected tribespeople and landless farmers.

Singh also highlighted militant infiltration across the Line of Control that divides Indian- and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and other borders.

"There are certain developments that are worrisome. Infiltration across the Line of Control and also via other routes such as Nepal, Bangladesh and the sea is going up," he said.

"Encounters with armed militants have become more frequent in recent weeks and months," he added.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of sending armed militants into the Indian zone of disputed Kashmir to foment a 17-year-old insurgency against New Delhi's rule in the divided Himalayan state.

Pakistan denies the charge.

The nuclear-armed neighbours launched a peace process in 2004, starting new road and rail links and improving people-to-people ties, but made little headway on the core issue of Kashmir.

The peace process was suspended after last year's Mumbai attacks, which India blamed on Pakistan-based militants. A total of 166 people were killed in a 60-hour assault by extremist gunmen on India's financial capital.

Singh said the attacks had highlighted the need to overhaul India's police system, in which officers are often underpaid, unmotivated and under-equipped.

"We need a new-age policeman who is more professional, better-motivated, suitably empowered...our police forces must operate on the frontiers of modern technology," Singh said.

Del Potro

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Del Potro, who turns 21 next week, snapped Federer's 41-match unbeaten streak on the Flushing Meadows hardcourts to win 1.85 million dollars and destroyed the Swiss superstar's aura of US Open invincibility.

"I would like to congratulate Juan Martin on an unbelievable tournament. I had a great one but he was the best," Federer said.

"I would have never believed I could win five in a row here. It has been an amazing run for me."

Firing consistent winners, the 1.98m Argentine giant kept the pressure upon the player many hail as the greatest in tennis history, one he had never beaten in six prior attempts, and won after four hours and six minutes.

Del Potro led Federer by two sets in the French Open semifinals before the Swiss rallied for a dramatic five-set victory.

But there was no such escape this time.

Federer was pushed into a fifth set for only the third time since the start of his championship run, the other times being against Andre Agassi in the 2004 quarterfinals and in last year's round of 16 against Igor Andreiev.

Del Potro zipped a forehand crosscourt winner past Federer for a break and a 2-0 lead in the final set and denied the top seed on a break-point chance in the third game on his way to a 5-2 lead.

Federer served to stay in the match but found himself down two match points, both squandered by Del Potro with a wide forehand and a netted backhand.

But Federer's 11th double fault gave Del Potro another chance and he made the most of it, winning when Federer sent a forehand over the baseline.

Del Potro realised he had won, fell to the ground on his back and began to cry.

Carjacker

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gunpoint in Pallabi residential area at about 9:00pm.

The criminals also shot the car driver when he tried to resist them from snatching the car.

Hearing the driver's scream, locals thronged the spot, caught the two criminals and gave them a good beating while the other managed to flee.

Police took Halim and Muktar to DMCH after the incident where Halim succumbed to his injuries around 12:30am.

The condition of Muktar was stated to be critical, hospital sources said.

However, Halim's wife claimed that her husband was not a car-lifter but a driver of a rent-a-car shop.

Moderate Kashmiri leader seeks unity with hardliners

AFP, Srinagar

The moderate leader of Indian Kashmir's largest political separatist group pledged Tuesday to seek reconciliation with hardliners who broke away six years ago.

"I will work for the unification of separatist camp," Mirwaiz Umar Farooq told AFP on Tuesday, a day after he was re-elected chairman of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference -- an amalgam of more than a dozen separatist parties.

The Hurriyat split in 2003 after moderates led by Farooq angered hardliners by declaring themselves open to talks with New Delhi on the future of the Muslim-majority Kashmir region.

Both factions claim to be the real Hurriyat.

Farooq's camp has held several rounds of talks with the government. The hardliners, led by Syed Ali Geelani, insist they will only join a dialogue if India declares Kashmir a "disputed

territory" and involves Pakistan in the talks.

The issue of divided Kashmir has triggered two wars between India and Pakistan, both of whom claim the region in full.

Tens of thousands have died since armed militants launched a separatist insurgency in Indian-controlled Kashmir in 1989.

Farooq said the alliance would "intensify efforts to strengthen the separatist movement" at the local and international levels.

"We will approach human rights organisations and international agencies for a resolution of Kashmir issue. We will increase pressure on the Indian and Pakistani administrations," said Farooq, a cleric who delivers regular sermons in the region's main mosque.

His father, also a cleric and leading separatist, was assassinated by unknown gunmen in 1990.

Stern action

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The AL chief told the meeting the government is mulling over a plan to call online tender soon to bring transparency in the tender process so that eligible people could win the bid.

AL men have already taken control of almost all the tenders across the country. The prime minister told her party leaders tender manipulation in the name of offering facilities to the party men would not be acceptable.

Some of the lawmakers then pointed out that most of the experienced contractors belong to the BNP-Jamaat alliance and they made huge "illegal money" during the four-party coalition government's rule.

As pro-AL contractors are apparently new in this field and have less money there should be a process of helping Awami League men to win the tenders, the lawmakers argued.

Hasina, in reply, said the government would follow some rules and regulations to this end, as it doesn't want to do what the BNP did during 2001-2006.

Talking '60' The 'Daily' Star another lawmaker said the prime minister asked them to remain alert as conspiracies are still going on against the government.

"She has directed us to make the highest sacrifice to fulfil the expectations of people who voted Awami League to power," he added.

AL lawmakers in the meeting told the prime minister that the syndicate comprised of MPs, chairmen and frontline government officials of the last BNP-Jamaat government still out to hinder the development programmes of the government.

Hasina directed the ministers to launch investigations into the syndicated corruption and take stern action against them, said Chief Whip Abdus Shahid while briefing newsmen after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad media centre.

Pak jets pound

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Afghanistan, but security throughout the country has deteriorated.

On Monday, three burqa-clad men tried to attack a major oil terminal in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi but were foiled by security forces, police said.

A guard died in the attack on the terminal, where oil supplies arrive for the country's largest oil refinery.

The three suspects tried to enter the oil terminal in the western Keamari area dressed as women, police said. The security guard on duty tried to intercept them, but was shot by the attackers.

A police vehicle patrolling nearby heard the gunshots and responded. The attackers managed to escape, but left behind 10 hand grenades, three Kalashnikov rifles and bullets stuffed in a lady's purse.

"It was a big attempt at terrorism averted by the police with the help of the brave guard," city police chief Waseem Ahmed said.

Police on Tuesday found some rockets and a suicide jacket in Saeedabad area, also in western Karachi. The items were found dumped along a sewer, police officer Majeed Dasti said.

Karachi has a population of more than 16 million and a history of political, religious and ethnic violence. It is also Pakistan's commercial capital, and Taliban fighters are believed to use it as a place to rest and raise money.

Pakistan's Port and Shipping Minister Babar

Ghori told AFP that Karachi's oil terminal supplies the whole country.

"This facility is a storage area, which supplies oil to the entire country and the incident could be a failed attempt to attack the terminal," he said.

Police suggested the incident could be linked to Islamist militancy in north-west Pakistan, where US officials say Taliban and al-Qaeda militants have carved out safe heavens to plot attacks in the region and the West.

"It could be related to militancy in the country's northwest but we are investigating," said Ghulam Nabi Memon, a senior police official.

In Karachi's Saeedabad area, which sits on the road to the insurgency-ridden province of Baluchistan, police seized rockets, grenades and a suicide jacket from a rubbish dump near a police training centre, police said.

"We also recovered two women's purses. Each contained a hand grenade," senior police official Abdul Majeed Dasti told AFP.

"We can't say whether they wanted to attack the nearby police training centre, but they might have wanted to use them for a big terror activity, which we have foiled," he said.

On Monday, a stampede killed up to 20 impoverished women and children in Karachi who were crushed in a stairwell and alley when charity workers handed out free flour in the crowded neighbourhood of Khorri Garden.

BDR trial finalised

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Sources said the meeting decided to hold the trial of the mutineers under the BDR Act before trying them in speedy tribunal.

The law minister said the government has taken the decisions following the Supreme Court's opinion and observations on the presidential reference regarding the mode of the trial.

The Supreme Court categorically opined that the offences committed during the BDR mutiny cannot be tried under the army act, not even by issuing a notification to give the law retrospective effect.

BDR Director General Maj Gen Md Mainul Islam told The Daily Star that the border force has already set up a few courts of inquiry to determine the number of mutineers. The trial under the BDR laws will be started as soon as possible after finalising the number.

The BDR DG will preside over the trial in the BDR court as per the law of the force.

Yesterday's meeting was told that the trial of criminal offences has to be held on the basis of only one charge sheet and all accused have to be produced before the court at a time during the trial proceedings, which will be a tough task for the government.

Sources said the meeting discussed the issue of most arrested BDR jawans' being accused of mutiny. Some of these arrested BDR personnel might be innocent and should be allowed to join their service, their release subject to trial, the meetings said.

After the meeting, the law minister told the press that the offences committed during the BDR mutiny will be classified on the basis of investigation report, which is now at the final stage.

The law minister said any accused found to have been involved in rebellion against the state during the BDR carnage will be tried on charge of sedition under the penal code.

The accused can appoint lawyers for self-defence, he said.

Asked if fair trial is possible under the BDR chief, Shafique Ahmed avoided a direct reply. He said the government will hold the trial of the BDR carnage following due legal process in a very transparent manner.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam, who was present at the meeting, told The Daily Star that the BDR personnel accused of mutiny will be tried at the stations where they committed the offence.

He said he or his representatives will assist the BDR DG in conducting the trials.

At least 73 people, including 57 army officers deputed at the paramilitary force, were killed in the February 25-26 bloody mutiny at Pikhana.

Some 1,779 people have been arrested so far in connection with the mutiny case filed in Dhaka while 1,721 were arrested in connection with 40 cases filed for rebellion outside Dhaka.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun, State Minister for Law Qam