

Nobel Prize won't change system

Says China

AFP, REUTERS, CNN, Beijing/Oslo

China said yesterday that awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo would not influence the country's political system, as the United States urged Beijing to lift restrictions on the activist's wife.

The comments came as Liu's lawyers said they were considering asking for a retrial of the jailed dissident, the co-author of a manifesto calling for bold democratic reforms in the communist state who won the prestigious award Friday.

"Some politicians from other countries are trying to use this opportunity to attack China," Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu told reporters, adding the Nobel committee's decision "shows no respect for China's judicial system".

"If some people try to change China's political system in this way and try to stop the Chinese people from moving forward, that is a big mistake," Ma said.

Asked about Liu's wife, Liu Xia, Ma responded, "I do not know who you are talking about. I am not familiar with this person."

The 54-year-old Liu, a one-time university professor, was jailed in December 2009 for 11 years on subversion charges -- a conviction that sparked international outrage.

China cancelled a cabinet level political meeting with Norway on Tuesday for the second time since the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo.

Ma Zhaoxu told a news conference in Beijing the award to Liu last week showed a lack of respect for China's judicial system that damaged ties between the two countries.

In Oslo, the Committee said that it would be "delighted" for Liu's wife to accept the award at a ceremony on December 10 in Oslo if Liu, who is serving an 11-year prison sentence for "subverting" the Chinese state, were prohibited from travelling.

Norwegian Fisheries Minister Lisbeth Berg-Hansen was supposed to meet Sun Dawei, vice minister of China's food safety authority, on Wednesday in Beijing but was told on Tuesday that the meeting was off, Norwegian officials said.

The United States, one of many countries that again called for Liu's immediate release following the announcement of the prize, on Tuesday expressed concern about the situation of his wife, who says she is under house arrest.



This handout photo released by the Ukrainian Interior Ministry Press Service shows policemen inspecting the wreckage of a bus, which crashed into a train at a level crossing in Marganest, over 100 kms (60 miles) south of Dnipropetrovsk yesterday, killing 40 people and leaving another 10 wounded.

PHOTO: AFP

NRO REVIEW HEARING DECISION

Oct 13 will have no 'bad' incident: Gilani

ANI, Islamabad

In the wake of Pakistan Supreme Court's decision to start the hearing on the pending National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) review petition today, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that there is no clash between the government and the judiciary, and that "nothing bad" will take place on that day.

"October 13 will come and go. Nothing bad will happen on this day and there will be no long march," the Dawn quoted Gilani, assaying.

The premier added that the government would stand its ground on the NRO.

He said that there was no showdown between the government and the apex court, and that the judiciary wanted a democratic system to flourish in the country.

Gilani also announced that 10 ministries would be reduced from the federal cabinet in the coming few months, adding that his government would give preference to merit on all levels.

Musharraf gives full marks to Manmohan in Kashmir

THE INDIAN EXPRESS ONLINE

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh deserves 'full marks' for his 'sincere' efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue and have peace with Pakistan, but is held back from taking a bold step over fears of domestic political backlash, former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has said.

In a TV interview, Musharraf disclosed that it was Manmohan, and not his predecessor Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who deserved the credit for a breakthrough in Indo-Pak relations, the 'Dawn' reported.

"It was with Manmohan Singh that we moved forward towards an agreement, not with Mr Vajpayee," he said.

"I give full marks to Manmohan Singh," he said, but added that the Indian premier lacked 'courage' in giving any concession on Kashmir, fearing domestic pressures.

"In any agreement, there is give and take... and it is the 'give' part that creates problems," the APML founder noted.

Manmohan had a "very good sense" about Indo-Pak relations, he acknowledged, adding, "I respect him very much."

Musharraf said that India and Pakistan were very close to an agreement before he lost power. "We were as close as drafting a final agreement."

"The draft was being formulated, that is the good thing, and it was being formulated in good spirit," he added.

But the former general insisted that there was "nothing in the Lahore Declaration" signed by the then Indian Premier, Vajpayee, and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif in February 1999, which could form the basis for a settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Musharraf revealed that he was surprised to see "no mention" of Kashmir in the declaration's draft, adding that a few sentences were drafted when he told Nawaz that it otherwise made no sense.

Militants destroy another Pak girls' school

ANI, Islamabad

Another girls school was destroyed in the Mohmand tribal area of northwest Pakistan, after unidentified militants detonated it with explosives, local media reported citing official sources.

With this attack, the number of schools destroyed by insurgent militants in the tribal area bordering Afghanistan has increased to 57 so far, English.news.cn reported.

Earlier on Sunday, two girls schools and a boy's school were destroyed in similar bomb blasts.

Believing that modern education is allegedly not in line with the Islamic scriptures, and with female education being their main target, the ultra orthodox Taliban have been trying to implement their own distorted version of "Shariah" or Islamic jurisprudence in the insurgency-plagued northwest tribal areas of Pakistan.

FAILED MISSION TO RESCUE UK HOSTAGE

US, UK military start probing

AP, Kabul

US and UK military officials began probing yesterday the tragic death of a captive British aid worker, possibly killed by a grenade thrown by American special forces during a failed rescue mission.

In other violence, two people were killed and 10 others wounded in an explosion aboard a coalition helicopter just after it landed in eastern Afghanistan on Tuesday. The coalition said it's unclear what caused the blast.

Ten civilians were killed in an insurgent rocket attack and a roadside bombing on Monday in the south and east, Afghan officials said.

The death of Linda Norgrove, 36, has reverberated through the corridors of power from Kabul, to London, to Washington where President Barack Obama expressed condolences and pledged "to get to the bottom" of what happened during the deadly raid.

Norgrove and six insurgents were killed Friday night after US special forces stormed a compound in eastern Kunar province. Norgrove was held for two weeks after she and three Afghan colleagues were ambushed and kidnapped Sept 26. Her colleagues were quickly

freed.

Nato said initially Norgrove was killed at the hands of her captors. On Monday, however, alliance officials said new information had come to light indicating Norgrove may have been killed by a US grenade.

"The review showed what was believed to be a member of the rescue team throwing a hand grenade in the area near where Ms. Norgrove was later found," said Nato spokeswoman Maj Sunset Belinsky. "It's now unclear what the exact circumstances surrounding her death are, and the investigation will attempt to determine the facts."

The White House said Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron both said the rescue operation was necessary and "agreed that it was now essential to get to the bottom of what had happened in the course of the rescue operation."

Obama offered his condolences to Cameron in a phone call Monday and promised a full investigation.

Cameron defended Friday's rescue mission. "We were clear that Linda's life was in grave danger and the operation offered the best chance of saving her life," Cameron told reporters at a news conference Monday.

Bashir 'won't accept' alternative to Sudan unity

AFP, Khartoum

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir warned yesterday that he will not accept an alternative to unity ahead of a referendum on southern independence, as talks over a contested border region broke down.

South Sudanese are due to vote on January 9 on whether they want independence or wish to remain part of a united Sudan.

Simultaneously, residents in the contested oil-rich region of Abyei are due to vote on whether they want to be part of north or south Sudan, but the two sides said negotiations in Addis Ababa on the region's future have broken down.

"Despite our commitment to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, we will not accept an alternative to unity," Bashir told parliament in a speech, without specifying his reaction in case of a "yes" vote in the south's referendum.

The CPA, signed in 2005, ended a two-decade civil war between north and south, during which two million people were killed.

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AL leader hacked to death

FROM PAGE 16

villagers laid siege to Hogoldanga police camp around 10:00 am. They also beat up camp In-Charge SI Monsur Ahmed inside the camp. Later other police personnel of the camp rescued him.

Police arrested one Rokunuzzaman, 32, from Damurhuda upazila town yesterday noon in this connection.

Police and family sources said a gang of 10 to 12 men went to Mizan's house around 12:30am and asked him to open the door.

Failing to get response from inside, the attackers broke open the door and entered the house around 1:15am. "They chopped and killed Mizan," victim's wife Doly Khatun told reporters.

The incident took place within 10 to 15 minutes in front of Doly and her two daughters Mitu and Mil. The gang escaped the scene exploding two bombs when the villagers started rushing to the spot, said locals.

Police Super of Chuadanga Nazrul Islam said they suspect issues over the up coming Union Parishad election might appear to be the reason behind the killing.

According to local sources, several groups are active to secure the union parishad chair. Deceased Mizan had rivalry with one of the aspirants, Nurul Islam who is also an incumbent UP member.

When the offenders reached the spot, Mizan repeatedly phoned Hogoldanga police camp and Damurhuda Police Station for help but received no response, claimed Doly.

"Police reached the spot after one-and-a-half-hour of the incident," Doly added. She, however, could not identify the members of the gang.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Damurhuda Police Station, Sikdar Moshir Rahman said he received Mizan's phone call around 1:00am when he was going to take meal.

"I started for his house, about 10

kilometres off the police station, soon after I received his call and reached there around 1:50am. But I found Mizan dead," added the OC.

Sub-Inspector (SI) of Hogoldanga police camp Monsur Ahmed denied receiving any phone call from Mizan on that night.

Our Kushtia correspondent reports, Mizan was made the acting UP chairman after the elected chairman, Moniruzzaman Moni was suspended on charge of corruption and landed in jail in 2007.

Moni secured bail in 2009 and since then he has been living in Dhaka. He is also the organising secretary of Damurhuda upazila unit BNP.

Arrestee Rokunuzzaman, who was arrested twice in 2007, is the younger brother of Moniruzzaman Moni, said police.

District police authority closed SI Monsur Ahmed at Chuadanga police line after the incident.

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