

NEWSIN

brief

Turkey, US hold talks on China missile deal

AFP, Ankara

A senior US defence official has held talks in Turkey, the embassy said yesterday, after Washington expressed "serious concerns" about Ankara's plans to acquire a long-range anti-missile system from China.

Turkey announced in September it was entering negotiations with the China Precision Machinery Export-Import Corporation to buy its first long-range anti-missile system. The move irritated its Nato allies, particularly the United States, which has imposed sanctions on CPMIEC for selling arms and missile technology to Iran and Syria.

Lata roots for Modi as Indian PM

NDTV ONLINE

Narendra Modi, who is leading the BJP's campaign as its prime ministerial candidate, on Friday found support from legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar who backed the Gujarat Chief Minister for the top job in the country.

"Narendrabhai is like my brother. All of us want to see him become the prime minister. On the auspicious occasion of Diwali, I hope our wishes would come true," the 84-year-old Ms Mangeshkar said at a function in Pune after Modi inaugurated a super-speciality hospital named after the singer's father, Deenanath Mangeshkar.

China fireworks factory blast kills 11

AFP, Beijing

Chinese police have detained two people after 11 died and 17 were injured by an explosion in a fireworks factory, state media reported yesterday.

The factory in southern China's Guangxi province exploded on Friday afternoon, the official Xinhua news agency said, without citing a cause. Local police have detained the manager and the legal representative of the factory, the report said.

Indian actress 'molested' by MP

PTI, Kollam

Congress MP N Peethambara Kurup, embroiled in controversy over alleged molestation of Malayalam cine actress Shweta Menon at a function here on Friday evening, yesterday strongly denied having committed such an act.

Shweta had complained, without naming her tormentor, that she was physically humiliated at the venue of the President's Trophy boat race function here on Friday evening. Media footage showed Kurup touching her after which the MP issued the statement.

Pakistan accuses US of sabotage

Says attacks aim at derailing peace talks, summons US envoy; Taliban set to elect new chief

AGENCIES

Pakistan yesterday summoned the US ambassador to protest over two recent drone attacks including the one that killed the leader of the Taliban, the foreign ministry said.

Hakimullah Mehsud, who was under a \$5 million US government bounty, was buried late Friday after being killed when a drone targeted his car in a compound in North Waziristan tribal district.

Earlier, Pakistan's interior minister said the death of Pakistani Mehsud has destroyed the country's nascent peace process.

"This is not just the killing of one person, it's the death of all peace efforts," Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said.

Nisar accused the United States of "scuttling" efforts to begin peace talks, and said "every aspect" of Pakistan's co-operation with Washington would be reviewed.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had pledged to talk with the Taliban to try to end its campaign of violence, which has left thousands dead in bombings and shootings across the country.

The foreign ministry said it had summoned US ambassador Richard Olson to protest over the drone strike that killed Mehsud and another that hit a day earlier.

The ministry statement also stressed that despite the drone strike the government was "determined to continue with efforts to

DRONE KILLS PAK TALIBAN CHIEF



Hakimullah Mehsud

engage the TTP".

Islamabad routinely condemns drone strikes as a violation of sovereignty, and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif urged President Barack Obama to end them during White House talks last week, but summoning the ambassador is an unusual step.

The strike came a day before a Pakistani delegation had been due to fly to North Waziristan to meet Mehsud.

Pakistani media say Mehsud's funeral has taken place at an unknown location in the tribal area of North Waziristan.

The Taliban's ruling council met yesterday to choose a new leader. Unconfirmed



Khan Said Sajna

reports say regional commander Khan Said Sajna has been elected to the top job.

However, senior Taliban commander Azam Tariq dismissed media reports that Said had been elected as "speculation", telling AFP a decision would be made "in the next few days".

Pakistan's security forces have been put on high alert following Mehsud's death.

The killing has prompted fears of TTP reprisals, as happened after the death of founder Baitullah Mehsud in 2009.

Caitlin Hayden, a spokesperson for the US president's National Security Council, would not comment on any US government

involvement or confirm the death but said it would be a serious loss for the group.

The Pakistan government has strongly condemned the drone attack as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.

Opposition parties accused the US of using the drone strike to stymie the peace process before talks proper had even started.

Former cricketer Imran Khan, leader of the Pakistan Tehrek-e-Insaaf (PTI) party that rules in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, said the strike had "sabotaged" peace talks and showed the US did not want peace in Pakistan.

PTI said it would call an emergency session of the provincial assembly to block Nato supply convoys transiting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on their way to Afghanistan.

Mehsud's death is seen as another setback for the militant group after the recent capture of a senior commander by US forces in Afghanistan.

Mehsud, who led the insurgency from North Waziristan, had a \$5m FBI bounty on his head and was thought to be responsible for the deaths of thousands of people.

He came to prominence in 2007 as a commander under the militant group's founder Baitullah Mehsud, with the capture of 300 Pakistani soldiers adding to his prestige among the militants.

His second-in-command, Waliur Rehman, was killed in a similar drone strike in May.

Third front in India is on the card: Akhilesh

PTI, Bihar

As parties other than Congress and BJP are in power in UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Odisha they are likely to win more seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and there is every possibility of formation of a Third Front, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said yesterday.

Accusing that development was a 'lost cause' for the Congress and BJP, Yadav said, "For the ruling party (Congress) and main opposition (BJP) development is a lost cause now ... in these circumstances there is a need for a third option in the country."

The senior Samajwadi Party leader told reporters that whether Third Front or any other name given to such a coalition, it would be against communal forces and oppose the "anti-people" policies of the Congress-led UPA.

On October 30, 14 parties along with the Left took part in an convention in Delhi which was considered as efforts to bring together non-Congress and non-BJP parties on a single platform.



(L-R) Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera shake hands prior to their meeting at the prime minister's residence in Tokyo, yesterday. Japan and Russia yesterday held their first joint defence and foreign ministers' meeting and agreed to boost security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific as they both warily watch neighbouring China's rising influence.

PHOTO: AFP

US police seek motive after deadly LA airport shooting

AFP, Los Angeles

US authorities sought a motive yesterday after a gunman armed with an assault rifle and a stock of ammunition opened fire at the Los Angeles International Airport, killing a federal official.

The attack on Friday, which injured seven other people, caused chaos in the busy US transport hub as panicked travelers bolted after Paul Anthony Ciancia blasted through a security checkpoint.

The 23-year-old then walked calmly through a packed terminal seeking further victims before being shot and wounded by police.

As investigators scoured the LAX crime scene yesterday, airport officials tweeted that flights would depart from other terminals. An estimated 1,550 scheduled flights with some 167,000 passengers were impacted Friday amid the resulting ground stop, they said.

The slain official was identified as Gerardo Hernandez, 39, the first Transportation Security Administration

(TSA) employee killed in the line of duty since the group was set up following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

Ciancia, who apparently had a grudge against the TSA, was still carrying plenty of ammunition when he was arrested, said Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti.

"There were more than 100 more rounds that could have literally killed everybody in that terminal today," he said.

While reports suggested Ciancia was a disgruntled loner, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said it could not rule out terrorism.

Authorities said it was unclear what triggered Ciancia's rampage at the country's third-busiest airport.

Police found a note on the suspect voicing "disappointment in the government" but stating that he did not want to harm "innocent people," a law enforcement official told the Los Angeles Times newspaper.

During the shooting spree, which lasted less than 10 minutes, he approached a number of people cowering in the terminal and pointed his gun at them, asking if they "were TSA."

Pirate money promotes global criminal activity

REUTERS, Washington

Pirates hijacking ships off the Horn of Africa and Somalia from 2005 to 2012 garnered well over a quarter of a billion US dollars in ransom and used the money for criminal activities worldwide, according to a report released on Friday.

The study reveals the pirates engaged in human trafficking, arms trafficking, funding militias and money laundering through trade in the stimulant known as khat, particularly in Kenya, as well as other illegal activities that divert money from the legal economy that would otherwise promote economic development.

It recommends a range of measures to combat the problem, including steps to deal with illegal cross-border cash smuggling, anti-money laundering measures and mechanisms to monitor financial flows through the khat trade.

The study, conducted by the World Bank and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime and based on interviews with former pirates, government officials, bankers and others countering piracy, estimates that piracy costs the global economy \$18 billion a year in increased trade costs. Attacks on ships off the coast of Somalia and the Horn of Africa yielded between \$339 million and \$413 million in ransom money in the seven years from 2005, it said.

China to silence Dalai Lama's voice in Tibet

REUTERS, Beijing

China aims to stamp out the voice of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in his restive and remote homeland by ensuring that his "propaganda" is not received by anyone on the internet, television or other means, a top official said.

China has tried, with varying degrees of success, to prevent Tibetans listening to or watching programmes broadcast from outside the country, or accessing any information about the Dalai Lama and the exiled government on the internet.

But many Tibetans are still able to access such news, either via illegal satellite televisions or by skirting Chinese internet restrictions. The Dalai Lama's picture and his teachings are also smuggled into Tibet, at great personal risk.

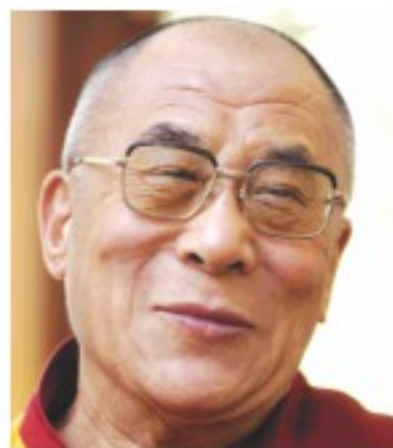
Writing in the ruling Communist Party's

influential journal Qiushi, the latest issue of which was received by subscribers on Saturday, Tibet's party chief Chen Quanguo said that the government would ensure only its voice is heard.

"Strike hard against the reactionary propaganda of the splittists from entering Tibet," Chen wrote in the magazine, whose name means "seeking truth".

The government will achieve this by confiscating illegal satellite dishes, increasing monitoring of online content and making sure all telephone and internet users are registered using their real names, he added.

China calls the Nobel peace prize-winning Dalai Lama a "wolf in sheep's clothing" who seeks to use violent methods to establish an independent Tibet. The Dalai Lama says he simply wants genuine autonomy for Tibet, and denies espousing violence.



'Europe states work together on spying'

REUTERS, London

Spy agencies across Western Europe are working together on mass surveillance of Internet and phone traffic comparable to programmes run by their US counterpart denounced by European governments, Britain's Guardian newspaper reported yesterday.

Citing documents leaked by fugitive former US National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden, the Guardian said methods included tapping into fibre optic cables and working covertly with private telecommunications companies.

The Guardian named Germany, France, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands as countries where intelligence agencies had been developing such methods in cooperation with counterparts including Britain's surveillance agency GCHQ. The report is potentially embarrassing for governments, especially in Germany and France which have been the most vocal in protesting about U.S. mass surveillance of European communication networks revealed by Snowden since June.

Germany, jointly with Brazil, circulated a draft resolution to a UN General Assembly committee on Friday that called for an end to excessive electronic surveillance, data collection and other gross invasions of privacy.



PINOCHET-ERA TORTURE After 40 years, Chilean wins compensation

BBC ONLINE

A Chilean exile tortured during the dictatorship of Gen Augusto Pinochet has won a landmark legal battle for compensation from the Chilean state.

Leopoldo Garcia Lucero sought moral damages through the Costa Rica-based Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Garcia, a UK resident, claimed that the Chilean state was responsible for forcing him into exile in 1975. It is the first time the court has ruled on a living survivor of human rights abuses from the Pinochet era.

Lawyers say it could have implications for the estimated 200,000 Chileans who fled General Pinochet's rule.

Garcia, now 80, was a Socialist who was arrested for his political beliefs in September 1973, five days after the coup that brought Gen Pinochet to power.

He was detained for over a year-and-a-half and tortured, leaving him permanently disabled due to spinal damage.

"I'm alive," he told the BBC's world affairs correspondent Caroline Hawley. "But it feels like a living death."

Garcia, who was held at the notorious Chacabuco concentration camp in the Atacama desert after his torture, says that the worst moment was when soldiers threatened to shoot his six-year-old daughter in the back, and then kill him.

His front teeth are missing, he requires a hearing aid, his face bears the scar from where he was hit on the forehead with a rifle butt, and he is in constant pain from the beatings he endured.

Doctors grow new face on girl's chest

PTI, Beijing

A 17-year-old girl in China has received a pioneering face transplant after doctors grew tissue grafted from her leg on her chest.

Xu Jianmei had the eight-hour surgery in the city of Fuzhou, in Fujian province, in the southeast of China, earlier this month.

The teenager was severely disfigured in a fire when she was just five years old. She lost her chin, eyelids and a large part of her right ear.

Xu's parents were unable to afford her plastic surgery, but last year, doctors proposed growing a new face on her chest using tissue grafted from her leg, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

A similar operation was conducted by Chinese doctors in late September, when a man in Fujian received a new nose that was grown on his forehead using tissue taken from his ribs.

US, Iraq vow to fight Qaeda

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama and Iraqi leader Nuri al-Maliki Friday discussed how to "push back" against al-Qaeda after the resurgent group whipped up the deadliest surge of violence in the country in five years.

Obama welcomed Maliki to the Oval Office nearly two years after the last soldier left Iraq, but as fears mount that al-Qaeda will send the country spiraling back into civil war.

"We had a lot of discussion about how we can work together to push back against that terrorist organization that operates not only in Iraq but also poses a threat to the entire region and to the United States," Obama said.

But he did not offer specifics of US aid. Before the visit, US officials privately hinted that they were willing to offer increased intelligence help to Iraqi forces battling extremist fighters -- many of whom have crossed into the country to flee violence that is rending neighboring Syria.

Amid some criticism that the United States left Iraq to fend for itself after an eight year occupation, Obama said that he appreciated Maliki's work to honor the sacrifice of 4,500 US troops that were killed in the war by building a "prosperous, inclusive and democratic Iraq."

Some Maliki critics in Washington feel



the prime minister has not done enough to include all of Iraq's minorities in the political system and has therefore fostered a well of sectarian resentment that has offered an opening for extremists.

October was Iraq's deadliest month since April 2008, with 964 killed and another 1,600 wounded. The vast majority of those killed were civilians.

Maliki has a wish list of US military hardware, including attack helicopters to go with already ordered fighter jets to help his ill-equipped military battle insurgents. But he did not say whether Washington had agreed to his requests.

In a joint statement issued after the talks, both sides agreed on the need "for additional equipment for Iraqi forces to conduct ongoing operations in remote areas where terrorist camps are located."