

MIGRANT CRISIS IN SE ASIA

UNSC holds first briefing on rights in Myanmar

REUTERS, United Nations
The United Nations Security Council yesterday held its first closed-door briefing on the human rights situation in Myanmar, focusing on the dire situation of the country's Rohingya Muslim minority, council diplomats said. UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein briefed the council via video link in a meeting that U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power welcomed on her Twitter feed as a "historic first" for the 15-nation body. Another diplomat confirmed the readout, adding that no immediate council action was expected.

No 'blame game' at today's meet: Thai FM

THE NATION ONLINE
There will be no blame game at a special regional meeting in Bangkok today in response to the migrant crisis, as it is an international burden that needs to be shared, Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tanasak Patimapagorn said yesterday. "Our point is not to blame the countries of origin. We have to protect our friends [neighbouring countries] too. No one wants to see this problem," he said when asked how the root cause of the problem should be dealt with.

Indonesia to get \$50m for hosting migrants

AFP, Doha
Gas-rich Qatar pledged \$50 million yesterday to help Indonesia shelter Muslim Rohingya migrants from Myanmar, the official QNA news agency reported. The aid pledge was announced by Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim as he met visiting Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi in Doha. The International Organization for Migration has appealed for \$26 million to help migrants in Southeast Asia.

Thai may charge illegal Rohingyas

THE NATION/ANN
All of the Rohingya and other migrants will be charged with and prosecuted for illegal entry unless granted refugee status after a follow-up inquiry into their reasons for travelling abroad, General Chatchaleram Chalermsook, army chief of staff said yesterday. Separately, all 49 suspects detained for allegedly smuggling migrants will be charged with transnational racketeering on top of several human-trafficking crimes, Thai police said yesterday.

Rohingyas dispersed from Thai town

THE NATION ONLINE
Fearing crackdown and constant harassment, the migrant Rohingya community in Ranong has dispersed, a Rohingya living in the province said. Ameen, a 54-year-old Rohingya living in Ranong for more than 30 years, said in fluent Thai that around 30 Rohingya families had moved out of a village in Tambon Bang Rin in Ranong's Muang district since the authorities began the suppression on human trafficking last year. Vacant houses in the community are now occupied by Myanmar nationals, the majority immigrant population in Ranong.

US, China on collision course

US seeks more support, action from Asian allies; China says US threatening 'chaos' in Asia-Pacific

AGENCIES

China yesterday accused the United States of threatening to sow "chaos" in the Asia-Pacific region by inciting countries whose territorial claims in the South China Sea clash with those of Beijing.

It is the latest round in a war of words over the area, where tensions are mounting and rhetoric escalating.

China is rapidly building artificial islands in the disputed waters, and US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter on Wednesday demanded an "immediate and lasting halt to land reclamation by any claimant".

Beijing's foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular briefing: "If the major powerhouse of world economic growth is thrown into chaos, will that serve the interests of the American side?"

The countries that make up the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum account for more than 50 percent of global GDP and nearly half of world trade. The South China Sea is a major shipping route for international trade.

Beijing insists it has sovereignty

over nearly all of the South China Sea, including waters far from the Chinese mainland and near the coasts of the Philippines, Vietnam and other Asian neighbours.

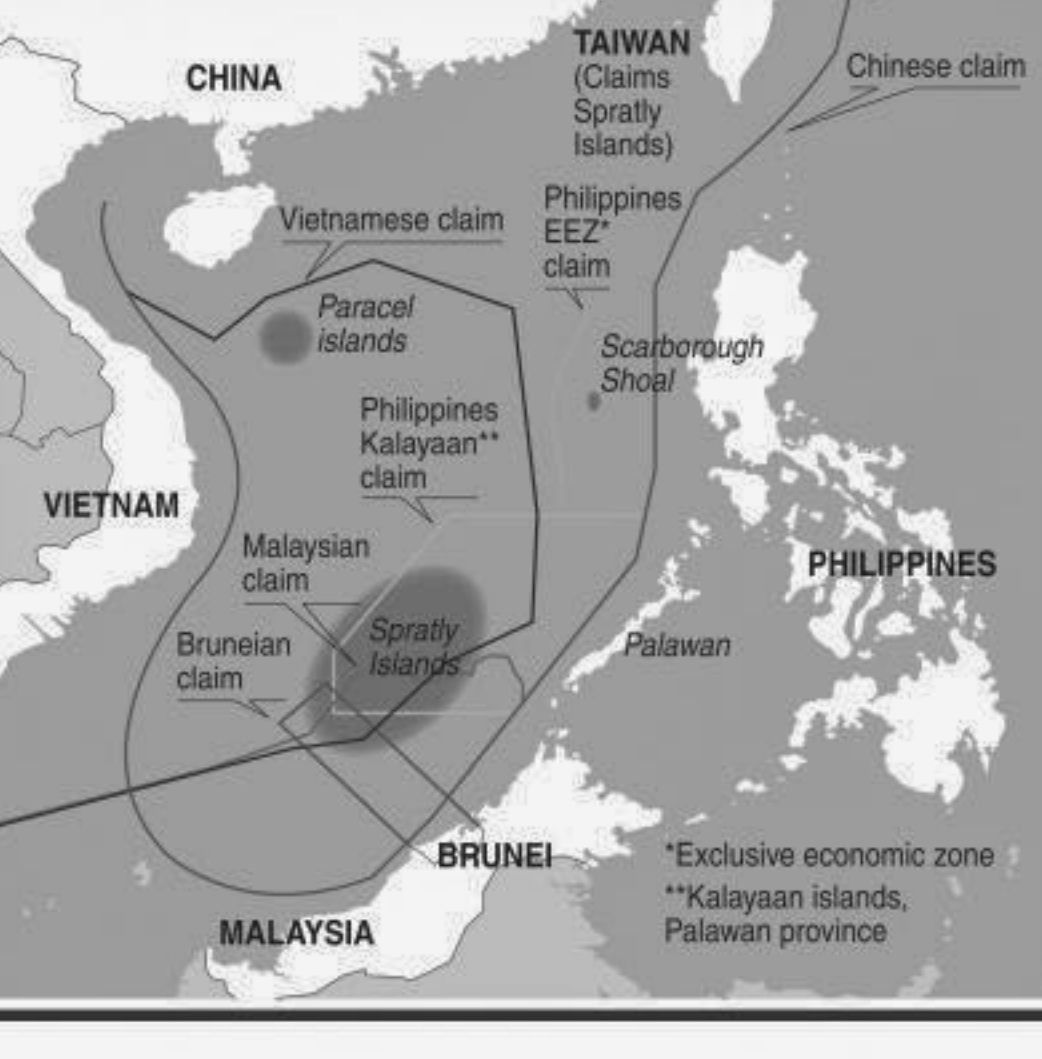
Hua told Washington to "refrain from all the provocative words and deeds".

"A few countries keep stirring up troubles in the South China Sea for (their) own selfish gains and provoking China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, while there are some other people who incite them to do so," she added.

Carter made his remarks in Hawaii as he prepared to embark on an Asian tour. It is his second tour of the region since taking over at the Pentagon in February and his itinerary includes Singapore, Vietnam and India.

Carter will hold the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore with China which is set to be overshadowed by the tensions in the

DISPUTED CLAIMS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA



South China Sea, where Beijing has added 1,500 acres to five outposts in the resource-rich Spratly islands since the start of this year.

"These countries need to own it (the issue)," one US defense official said on condition of anonymity, adding that it was counterproductive for the United States to take the lead in challenging China

over the issue.

More unified action by the partners, including the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), needed to happen soon because "if you wait four years, it's done," the official said.

While some Asean members, including US ally the Philippines and fellow claimant Vietnam, have been vocal critics of Chinese maritime actions, the group as a whole has been divided on the issue and reluctant to intervene.

But in a sign of growing alarm, the group's leaders last month jointly expressed concern that reclamation activity had eroded trust and could undermine peace in the region.

Experts dismiss the idea of Asean-level joint action any time soon in the South China Sea. "It's absolute fantasy," said Ian Storey of Singapore's Institute on South East Asian Studies.

But stepped-up coordination

between some states is possible.

China claims 90 percent of the South China Sea, which is believed to be rich in oil and gas, with overlapping claims from Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan.

US officials have said Navy ships may be sent within 12 miles of the Chinese-built islands to show that Washington does not recognize Beijing's insistence that it has territorial rights there.

Washington is also pressing ahead with its rebalancing towards Asia, four years after President Barack Obama announced the strategic shift, even as some countries say it is slow to take shape.

The United States has updated its security agreements with treaty allies Japan and the Philippines and is bolstering missile defenses in Japan with an eye on North Korea.

Overall, defense officials said, the Navy will increase its footprint by 18 percent between 2014 and 2020. The aim is to have 60 percent of Navy ships oriented toward the Pacific by 2020, compared to 57 percent currently.

NEWS IN brief

Santorum launches White House race

AFP, Washington
Rick Santorum, the dark-horse 2012 US presidential contender whose deeply conservative, often-gruff campaign put nominee Mitt Romney to the test, announced Wednesday he is launching a second run for the White House. It will be a more difficult proposition for him this time around. With 15 or more prominent Republican presidential contenders as his 2016 rivals, Santorum, 57, is even more the White House underdog than he was four years ago.

Tibetan burns herself to death in China

AFP, Beijing
A Tibetan mother-of-two burned herself to death to highlight repression in the Chinese Himalayan region, overseas media and rights groups said, the second such fiery protest in eight days. Sangye Tso died after setting herself on fire in Zhouni, a Tibetan-majority area of the northwestern Chinese province of Gansu. It is the 141st such act in Tibet and elsewhere since 2009, most of them fatal, it said.

470 bodies exhumed from Tikrit mass graves

AFP, Baghdad
Iraq has exhumed the remains of 470 people believed to have been executed by jihadists near Tikrit last year in what is known as the Speicher massacre, the health minister said yesterday. In June 2014, armed men belonging or allied to the Islamic State group abducted hundreds of young, mostly Shia recruits from Speicher military base, just outside the city of Tikrit. They were then lined up in several locations and executed one by one, as shown in pictures and footage later released by ISIS.

Leading Shebab figure dies in Somalia

AFP, Mogadishu
A leading figure in the Somalia-based al-Qaeda-affiliated Shebab movement has died in Somalia, the Islamic militant group said yesterday. In a death announcement and obituary carried by jihadist media, the Shebab said Sheikh Hassan Abdulahi Turki, known as Hassan Turki, died on Wednesday evening in the Middle Juba region south of the capital Mogadishu. Turki was in his 70s and suffered from poor health.

Clinton emails to be released monthly

AFP, Washington
A US judge on Wednesday ordered the State Department to begin releasing tens of thousands of emails by White House hopeful Hillary Clinton every month from June 30, rejecting a plan to publish them every 60 days.

UN demands action for crimes against journalists

AFP, United Nations

The UN Security Council on Wednesday urged world governments to end impunity for those who silence journalists in a resolution applauded as historic by a leading media rights group.

The resolution adopted unanimously by the 15-member council expresses "deep concern at the threat to the safety of journalists" from extremists such as the Islamic State.

Last year, 66 journalists were killed while on assignment, and more than 90 percent of crimes against reporters go unpunished, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

This year, 25 journalists have lost their lives, including four cartoonists at the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine in Paris who were gunned down by jihadists in an attack that shocked the world.

The resolution "urges member-states to ensure accountability for crimes committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel" working in war zones.

RSF secretary-general Christophe Deloire welcomed the resolution, saying "this is a historic day for the protection of journalists and we hope also for the freedom of the press."

Drafted by Lithuania and co-sponsored by 58 countries, the resolution seeks to build on a first measure passed in 2006.

More than 700 journalists have been killed over the past 10 years, prompting RSF's Deloire to declare that more can be done to protect reporters.



Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (L) speaks with current Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) during a meeting in New Delhi, yesterday. The meeting came just hours after Manmohan accused his successor of suppressing dissent and undermining democratic institutions in India, in an unusually outspoken attack a year after losing office.

PHOTO: AFP

Tajikistan special forces chief 'joins ISIS group'

BBC ONLINE

Tajikistan's special forces chief has appeared in a video claiming to have joined Islamic State forces in Syria.

Gulmurod Khalimov is seen in the footage dressed in black and holding a gun. He went missing in early May.

He says he joined IS in protest at Tajikistan's policy towards religion, which he says is anti-Islamic.

Hundreds of Central Asians are thought have left for Syria, but this is the first known case of such a high profile officer joining the militants.

The authorities in Tajikistan have refused to comment on his whereabouts since his disappearance, reports the BBC's Abdujalil Abdurasulov in Almaty.

Khalimov used to fight extremists at home and was one of the best trained officers in the country, our correspondent says.

In the video, which is believed to have been recorded in a Syrian camp, he says he plans to return to Tajikistan and "bring slaughter".

He voices his disillusionment with the Tajik police and talks about the hardship of thousands of Tajik working migrants in Russia.

There are no official figures for the number of Tajik citizens fighting alongside Islamic State, but in January sources in the security services were quoted saying they range from 200 to 500.

Central Asian fighters have also formed their own groups such as Sabri Jamaat and Imam Bukhari Jamaat, the BBC's Abdujalil Abdurasulov says.

Many of these militants have reportedly been seen in major battles in Syrian cities, including Aleppo, Kobane and lately in Palmyra.



Pakistan hangs 3 for 1998 plane hijacking

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan yesterday executed three Baluch separatists convicted of hijacking a plane in 1998, which they attempted to fly to India to disrupt Islamabad's first nuclear tests, officials said.

The executions were carried out on the 17th anniversary of the tests, which made Pakistan the world's seventh nuclear-armed power—a landmark event for the impoverished Muslim country of 200 million people.

Two of the men, Shahsawar Baluch and Sabir Baluch were hanged in Hyderabad prison in southern Sindh province while the third, Shabir Rind, was hanged in Karachi, officials at both the prisons told AFP.

Tripura revokes emergency law

AFP, Guwahati

A remote Indian state has withdrawn a long-standing controversial law that handed security forces sweeping powers to fight insurgents, saying it was no longer needed, a top official said yesterday.

The draconian law, covering parts of northeastern India and restive Kashmir, gives forces the right to search property and shoot-on-sight and is seen by critics as cover for grave human rights abuses.

The law is still imposed in other northeastern states including Assam, Nagaland and Manipur.

AFSPA was introduced in tiny Tripura in 1997 in the wake of stepped up attacks by militants bordering Bangladesh. The law was also introduced in 1990 in Indian Kashmir to give army and paramilitary forces there extensive powers to detain people and use deadly force.

Governments say security forces need the powers to help them battle multiple rebel groups whose long-standing demands range from secession to greater autonomy and land rights. But human rights groups say it provides cover for soldiers who are regularly accused of murder and rape, but they cannot be prosecuted unless the national government gives its sanction.



A Royal Malaysian Navy helicopter flies over a Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency patrol boat north of Langkawi island, yesterday. The Malaysian navy and coast guard are conducting ongoing search and rescue operations for boats carrying stricken migrants including ethnic Rohingya from Myanmar, as the country said May 28 it believes 139 people are buried in graves at remote detention camps used by people-smugglers on the Thai border which were discovered on the weekend.

PHOTO: AFP

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Position	Qualifications
Registrar	Minimum Masters degree with good academic background. Dynamic, energetic, capable of working under pressure; ability to provide administrative support to the Vice Chancellor and to the Board of Trustees. Relevant administrative experience of 15 years in similar position is essential.
Director, Finance & Accounts	MBA/M.Com (Accounting/ Finance/AIS) and qualified as Associate Chartered Accountant or equivalent. Minimum 10 years of experience in managing finance and accounts of a medium size operation, preferably educational institution and experience in using accounting software. Sufficient updated knowledge of the laws, rules and regulations relevant to financial management of private universities. Age, maximum 50 years.

Applications along with C.V. (format available at UAP website: www.uap-bd.edu), 2 copies of passport-sized photograph, copies of relevant certificates should reach the undersigned (either by e-mail to jobs@uap-bd.edu or by post) by **14 June 2015**. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview.

Registrar in charge