

Panama vows tax cooperation with OECD

AFP, Tokyo

Visiting Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela told a Japanese news agency yesterday that his country would cooperate with an OECD initiative to share tax information in the wake of the "Panama Papers" scandal.

Varela said in an interview with Kyodo News that Panama has "decided to join the common reporting standards," referring to the measures on exchanging financial account information with tax authorities set by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Panama is scrambling to avert redesignation as a tax haven that assist money laundering after the disclosure of the offshore dealings of many of the world's wealthy, famous and infamous in the so-called "Panama Papers" revelations.

The scandal, which has already brought down the Icelandic prime minister and Spain's industry minister, came when millions of documents covering nearly 40 years of business were leaked from the archives of the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca.

"The OECD's technical team is coming to Panama this week and we are going to meet and find ways to come to an agreement," said Varela, who plans to meet Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his visit to Japan.

OECD head Angel Gurría said last week that Isabel De Saint Malo, vice president of the Central American country, had called him to express willingness to cooperate with his organisation.

HC drops

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Eunus also said, "I will move the petition before another High Court bench later."

He filed the petition with the HC on April 4 seeking its directives on the government to launch a judicial enquiry and arrest the killer(s) within 24 hours.

In the petition, Eunus prayed to the court to order the government to pay Tk 30 lakh as compensation to the victim's family.

He also requested the HC to issue rule asking the government to explain as to why its inaction over arresting the killer(s) should not be declared illegal.

Tonu, a second-year history student of Comilla Victoria Government College and a theatre activist, was found dead in Comilla cantonment area on March 20.

Koh-i-Noor

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The 108-carat Koh-i-Noor gem, which came into British hands during the colonial era, is the subject of a historic ownership dispute and has been claimed by at least four countries including India.

But India's Solicitor General Ranjit Kumar said the 19th-century Sikh king Ranjit Singh had given the stone to the British.

It is now set in the crown that was worn by Queen Elizabeth's mother until her death in 2002, and is on public display in the Tower of London.

"It was given voluntarily by Ranjit Singh to the British as compensation for help in the Sikh Wars. The Koh-i-Noor is not a stolen object," he told the Supreme Court.

The court was hearing a suit filed by the All India Human Rights & Social Justice Front, a non-governmental organisation, seeking the diamond's return.

It asked the solicitor general to file an affidavit giving the government's stance on the issue.

The stone was presented to Queen Victoria in 1850 after the Anglo-Sikh wars in which Britain gained control of the Sikh empire of the Punjab, which is now split between Pakistan and India.

Singh in turn had taken it from an Afghan king who had sought sanctuary in India.

The diamond had been an heirloom of the Afghan monarchy and before then was in Persian royal hands, but its true origins remain a mystery.

Its name translates as "Mountain of Light" and it is traditionally worn by a queen -- it is said to bring bad luck to any man who wears it.

In 1976 Britain refused a request to cede the diamond, citing the terms of the Anglo-Sikh peace treaty.

"I could not advise Her Majesty the Queen that it should be surrendered," said Jim Callaghan, prime minister at the time.

Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron has also said he would oppose returning the diamond.

"If you say yes to one you suddenly find the British Museum would be empty," he told NDTV television in 2010. "It is going to have to stay put."

Nobel laureates to visit N Korea for 'silent diplomacy'

AFP, Seoul

A trio of Nobel laureates will take part in a "humanitarian" visit to North Korea later this month, even as suspicions grow that Pyongyang is preparing to carry out a fifth nuclear test.

The Vienna-based International Peace Foundation, which is organising the trip, said yesterday it was an exercise in "silent diplomacy" that would focus on such topics as economic policy and medical development.

The three laureates from Norway, Britain and Israel, who won their Nobels for economics, medicine and chemistry, will give speeches and hold seminars with students at some of the North's elite schools, including Kim Il-Sung University.

"The events will not engage in rhetoric by making political statements," the foundation said in a press release.

"Listening to and engaging with the young generation of (North Korea) may be a gateway to establish a dialogue which could contribute to a wider understanding beyond politics and power play," added its founding chairman, Uwe Morawetz, who has visited the North six times over the past two years to prepare the visit.

The trip is likely to be criticised in

some quarters at a time when the focus of the international community is on tightening North Korea's diplomatic and economic isolation.

The April 29-May 6 dates mean the visit might also coincide with a fresh North Korean nuclear test.

South Korean President Park Geun-Hye confirmed yesterday that increased activity had been detected at the North's nuclear test site at Punggye-ri, suggesting an underground detonation could be imminent.

Numerous analysts have predicted Pyongyang may carry out a fifth test just before a rare ruling party congress next month, at which leader Kim Jong-Un is expected to take credit for pushing the country's nuclear weapons programme to new heights.

No formal date has been set for the congress, but South Korea's intelligence agency says it will likely be held May 7.

North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January, triggering the most extensive UN sanctions to date aimed at cutting funding sources for its nuclear development.

The Nobel laureates will hold a press conference in Beijing after returning from their visit.

Iraq PM calls on fractious parliament to do its job

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi premier Haider al-Abadi yesterday called for the fractious parliament to put aside its differences and do its job, saying he hopes a new cabinet will be approved in days.

Iraq has been hit by weeks of political turmoil surrounding Abadi's move to replace the current cabinet of party-affiliated ministers with a government of technocrats.

His efforts to change the cabinet, which have faced significant opposition from powerful political parties that rely on control of ministries for patronage and funds, were overshadowed by chaos in parliament last week.

Both the United States and the United Nations have warned that the political crisis could distract from efforts to combat the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group, which overran large areas of Iraq in 2014.

"I call on parliament to convene immediately to overcome the obstacles and contribute to developing solutions to the challenges facing the country," Abadi said in a statement.

"I look forward to parliament being able to undertake its... legislative and

supervisory role and voting on the cabinet reshuffle in the coming days," he said.

Abadi presented a list of cabinet nominees at the end of March, but the political blocs put forward their own candidates, and most of the premier's original list was replaced on a second presented to MPs last week.

Some MPs demanded the opportunity to vote on Abadi's original list -- from which at least two candidates had already withdrawn -- but the session was adjourned on Tuesday without a vote.

Dozens of lawmakers then began a sit-in and spent the night in parliament, while an "emergency" session on Wednesday ended with MPs shouting, shoving and throwing punches in the chamber.

And on Thursday, lawmakers voted to sack parliament speaker Salim al-Juburi and his deputies, but the speaker insists the session at which the vote was held lacked a quorum and was therefore invalid.

Juburi opponents tried to meet on Saturday to select replacements for him and his deputies, but MPs from the Shia Badr bloc said they would not attend, leaving it without a quorum.

Dhaka, Delhi

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When completed, the plant would help meet the local demand to a large extent. The plant would supply LPG to Tripura, initially by road and later through a pipeline, according to the official.

Bangladesh now has a huge demand for LPG and home users are suffering from dwindling gas supply through pipes.

State-run Eastern Refinery Ltd (ERL), a company of BPC, supplies only 14,000 tonnes of LPG, while the Kailashtila LPG plant chips in with 4,000 tonnes. Private producers supply the bulk of the 135,000 tonnes of LPG produced in the country.

Pradhan also held a meeting with Hamid for two hours at the same venue ahead of the media briefing, with an aim of deepening energy cooperation between the two countries.

At the meeting, it was decided that Bangladesh would import high-speed diesel (meant for high rpm diesel engines) from Numaligarh Refinery Ltd in India to Parbatipur in Bangladesh through pipeline on a long-term basis.

On March 19, Bangladesh received 2,200 tonnes of diesel from India through rail.

In April last year, Bangladesh and India agreed to install a 135km cross-border pipeline to help Dhaka import 10 lakh tonnes of diesel from India a year under a joint venture for setting up the Indo-Bangla Friendship Pipeline from NRL's Siliguri marketing terminal in West Bengal to the BPC's Parbatipur depot.

Only five kilometres of the pipeline would be in Indian territory.

India also agreed in principle to supply liquefied natural gas from its LNG facility in Odisha to the Bangladesh border and integrating the supply with Bangladesh's gas grid, sources said.

The Indian minister also proposed setting up of an LNG terminal in Moheshkhali by Petronet LNG Ltd.

"India is setting up a deep-sea LNG terminal. We have already installed a

pipeline up to Khulna. We have discussed whether we can connect the two," said Hamid.

"If connected, we will be able to ensure uninterrupted supply of gas to industries and the under-construction power plants in Khulna."

Hamid said India could use the same pipeline to supply LNG to West Bengal via Rangpur.

"With this, the two countries would benefit."

The state minister said there was also discussion on setting up a land-based LNG station through government-to-government initiative. "We have requested them to give a formal proposal."

Dhaka also expressed willingness to import gas from Tripura.

"There is gas shortage in our eastern side. If we can bring up to 70 million cubic feet of gas from Tripura, we will be able to reduce our energy crunch to a large extent," said Hamid.

Pradhan said he would take the issue up with his government.

All the proposals that came up yesterday would be discussed in details at the energy secretary-level meeting due in the first week of June this year.

Meanwhile, Engineers' India Ltd and ERL would sign a contract in Chittagong today to work as a consultant for expanding the capacity of ERL by another 3 million tonnes.

"This again is expected to cater to the huge unmet demand of petroleum products in Bangladesh," said Pradhan.

"We attach highest importance to our relations with Bangladesh, a close neighbour with whom we share a lot. Our bilateral relations have never been better. While our cooperation is very broad-based, we are simultaneously exploring new vistas of engagement."

Bangladesh now imports 600 megawatts of electricity from the neighbouring country and plans to purchase more to meet its growing demand for power. More than 40 percent Bangladeshis do not have access to the power grid.

400 feared

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The Italian coastguard has also said it knew nothing about the reported disaster.

Médecins Sans Frontières has also been unable to confirm to The Independent whether the tragedy has taken place.

Yesterday morning, the Italian coastguard said 108 refugees had been saved and six bodies recovered from a semi-submerged rubber dinghy on Sunday.

Separately, 33 refugees were rescued overnight off eastern coast of Sicily.

A year ago, a fishing boat crowded with refugees sank in the Mediterranean with around 800 people trapped inside.

Italy has now vowed to raise the shipwreck from the sea floor, to recover the corpses.

Almost 6,000 refugees sailed from Libya to Italy last week, in what appears to be the beginning of a wave of 100,000, the International Organisation for Migration said.

EU policymakers have been criticised of "killing by neglect" after they cut rescue missions in the Mediterranean.

The scaling back of search and rescue operations "created the conditions that led to massive loss of life," according to a report.

Tanya Steele, CEO of Save the Children, said: "The lack of concrete measures to protect children who gamble and lose their lives to reach the perceived safety of Europe should weigh on all our minds. A year on from one of the greatest migration tragedies in the Mediterranean, safe and legal routes have not been properly implemented.

"Europe continues to see this migration crisis as primarily about safeguarding its own borders. A third of those desperate enough to make this perilous journey are children. Even though the European Commission has identified children as one of the most vulnerable groups, recommending relocation measures as a priority, in effect, this is only happening on paper.

"This gruesome anniversary must not be purely symbolic. It is an insult to the thousands of men, women and children who have drowned on Europe's shores if action is not urgently taken to prevent the further loss of human lives. Europe's leaders must invest in search and rescue at sea and offer safe and dignified means of applying for asylum, in line with its legal obligations."

2 killed

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Lt Col Miftah Uddin Ahmed, commanding officer of Rab-7.

Acting on a tip-off that some criminals were preparing to commit a robbery in Muhuri Project area around 4:00am, a team of Rab-7 raided there, said the Rab official.

Sensing the elite force members' presence, the gang opened fire on the team, prompting the law enforcers to return fire that triggered the gun battle, claimed the Rab official.

After the gun battle, the bodies of Yakub and Kamrul were found on the spot while the others fled.

The Rab official claimed to have recovered eight firearms, including four pistols, bullets, sharp weapons and looted goods from the spot.

Miftah said on the CCTV footage, the deceased were seen robbing the jewellery shop.

In March, police arrested one Jaman from Naogaon in connection with the robbery. Owner of the jewellery shop claimed that robbers looted over 200 tolas of gold ornaments.

With yesterday's two, at least five people were killed and six others were injured in seven incidents of "gunfights" with the law enforcement agencies in different areas in Chittagong since July last year.

The law enforcers claimed that all the deceased were suspected robbers or criminals.

BNP brings 19 new faces

FROM PAGE 1

Organising Secretary Abdus Salam Azad and Rajshahi Divisional Assistant Organising Secretary Abdul Momin Talukder Khoka were holding the same post in the previous committee.

The 18 new assistant organising secretaries are Shahidul Islam Babul (Dhaka), Mahbub Rahman Shamim and Abul Hashem Bakar (Chittagong), Shahin Shawkat (Rajshahi), Anindya Islam Anik and Joyanta Kumar Kunda (Khulna), Akan Kuddus Rahman and Mahbubul Haq Nannu (Barisal), Dildar Hossain Selim and Kalimuddin Milon (Rangpur) Shamsuzzaman Zaman, and Jahangir Alam (Rangpur), Mostak Ahmed and Abdul Awal Khan (Comilla), Shariful Alam and Wares Ali Mamun (Mymensingh) and Ali Newaz Khoiyam and Selimuzzaman Selim (Faridpur).

In the three phases, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has so far appointed 40 leaders to the posts of secretary general, senior joint secretary general, treasurer, joint secretaries general, organising secretaries and assistant organising secretaries, exercising the power bestowed upon her by the party councillors at the Sixth National Council held on March 19.

Besides, Khaleda and her son Tarique Rahman have been elected as the party chairperson and the senior vice-chairman in the council.

Insiders said it was a very tough task for Khaleda to pick the names due to internal conflicts and also because 60 to 70 senior leaders were holding more than one posts.

According to the updated charter of the party, none of the party leaders can hold more than one post.

The insiders said all of the 21 leaders are dedicated to the party and loyal to Tarique Rahman.

Several BNP leaders have recently told The Daily Star that many are "lobbying hard" for the 19 posts of the standing committee and the executive committee. The executive committee may consist 750 party leaders, they said.

My freedom

FROM PAGE 16

at Imran Sarkar. Perhaps he has finally exposed his true face. It looks like he has become like most of our civil society, another opportunist and a liar.

"Maybe the BNP paid him off. Who knows. Either way, I have lost all respect for him. He needs to retract his statement and apologise to our Government.

"I urge all my friends and fans who follow him to unfollow/unfriend him on Facebook. He is speaking on behalf of a criminal who tried to kill me," added Joy.

In his reaction to Joy's remark, Imran yesterday wrote: "In my status, I clearly said I don't support the ideology of Shafik Rehman. I didn't ask for his release. But I am coming under fire... This shows the level of respect the society now has for dissenting opinions."

"Nearly a thousand people were murdered in the first three months of this year. Can anyone say that a single person has got justice? Won't anyone get justice if he or she is not the child of the prime minister? Doesn't Tonu's [Sohagi Jahan Tonu] father have the right to get justice just because he is a grade-IV employee?" Imran questioned.

"My Facebook... It is the media of people. My Facebook speaks for the oppressed, deprived and helpless people. The fight against injustice would continue..." he wrote.

Search on for survivors

FROM PAGE 16

which was already forecast for near-zero growth this year due to plunging oil income.

The energy industry appeared largely intact although the main refinery of Esmeraldas was closed as a precaution. However, exports of bananas, flowers, cocoa beans and fish could be slowed by ruined roads and port delays.

The quake could also alter political dynamics ahead of next year's presidential election.

The government's response seemed relatively speedy, with Vice President Jorge Glas flying into the disaster zone within hours and Correa coming straight back from a trip in Italy.

But some survivors complained about lack of electricity and supplies, and aid had still not reached some areas.

AFTERSHOCKS

About 230 aftershocks have rattled survivors, who huddled in the streets, worried the tremors could topple their already cracked homes.

"We're scared of being in the house," said Yamil Faran, 47, surrounded by some 30 people in a street in Portoviejo. "When... the aftershocks stop, we're going to see if we can repair it."

About 130 inmates in Portoviejo took advantage of the destruction and chaos to climb over the collapsed walls of the low-security El Rodeo prison. More than 35 had been recaptured, authorities said Sunday night.

Yesterday, people swarmed into the middle of Portoviejo in search of any materials of value among destroyed buildings, including a social security office. Desks

and papers lay strewn around as locals carried off aluminium window frames and cables.

"I have to take some advantage from this horrible tragedy. I need money to buy food. There's no water, no light, and my house was destroyed," said Jorge Espinel, 40, who works in the recycling business.

About 13,500 security personnel were mobilized to keep order. Some \$600 million in credit from multilateral lenders was immediately activated for the emergency, the government said.

Domestic aid funds were being set up and Venezuela, Chile and Mexico were sending personnel and supplies.


The Ecuadorean Red Cross mobilized more than 800 volunteers and staff and medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres said it was sending a team from Colombia.

Two Canadians were among the dead. Jennifer Mawn, 38, and her 12-year-old son, Arthur, died when the roof of their coastal residence collapsed.

Residents on the Galapagos islands, far off Ecuador's coast and home to numerous rare species, said they had not been affected by the quake.

The tremor followed two large and deadly quakes that have struck Japan since Thursday. Both countries are on the seismically active "Ring of Fire" that circles the Pacific, but the US Geological Survey says large quakes separated by such distances would probably not be related.

DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Today 19th April, 2016 is the first death anniversary of **Mr. Aftabuddin Ahmed C.A.** He was one of the senior most member of ICAB. His children request for prayer for the departed soul from all his well-wishers.

EDCL ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh

Ref No: EDCL/PD-Gopalganj/ICT/M&E/2016/717 Date: 17 April, 2016

Amendment of Tender Notice
(Amendment No-03)

Project Title : Establishment of Essential Drugs Company Limited (3rd Plant), Gopalganj

Tender Name: Supply, Erection, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Validation & Qualification of Mechanical & Electrical Services.

Tender Ref. No: EDCL/PD-Gopalganj/ICT/M&E Services/2016/19, Dated: 18 January, 2016

Notice Sl. No	Subject to be Amended	Existing As	Shall be amended As
14	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	19 April, 2016 at 05:00 PM (Local Time)	27 April, 2016 at 05:00 PM (Local Time)
15	Tender Closing Date and Time	20 April, 2016 at 03:00 PM (Local Time)	28 April, 2016 at 03:00 PM (Local Time)
16	Tender Opening Date and Time	20 April, 2016 at 03:30 PM (Local Time)	28 April, 2016 at 03:30 PM (Local Time)

All other terms & conditions shall remain unchanged.

(Prof. (Dr) Ehsanul Kabir)
Project Director
Establishment of Essential Drugs Company Limited (3rd Plant), Gopalganj