



Desperate to earn money, hawkers put on display for sale winter cloths and bags surrounding a city corporation garbage container near Baitul Mukarram Mosque Market in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Trump win casts pall of uncertainty over Asia

AFP, Beijing

President-elect Donald Trump's vague and ambiguous foreign policy positions have cast a pall of uncertainty over whether American influence will decline in Asia, or if it will remain a force to be reckoned with, analysts say.

The real estate tycoon-turned-politician frequently savaged China on the campaign trail, even calling it America's "enemy" and pledging to stand up to a country he says views the US as a pushover.

But he has also indicated he is not interested in getting involved in far-off squabbles, saying America is sick of paying to defend allies like Japan and South Korea, even suggesting they should develop their own nuclear weapons.

"Trump could play the isolationist card and strike a deal with China to share regional influence," said Ashley Townsend of the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney.

"But he might equally decide to adopt a firm military stance on a country he thinks regards America as weak."

Trump has offered no clear prescriptions for the geopolitical issues that plague the relationship between Washington and Beijing, from Beijing's territorial claims in the South China Sea to North Korea's nuclear programme and the future of Taiwan.

"At this juncture, governments

around the world cannot depend on any particular set of US policies, since Trump's sometimes flip foreign policy statements were often contradictory," said Graham Webster, a US-China expert at Yale Law School.

In recent months, despite President Barack Obama's foreign policy "pivot" to Asia the US has seen some of its regional allies begin to drift into Beijing's sphere of influence -- attracted by the economic appeal of the neighbourhood's biggest player.

Newly elected Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte cosied up to China during a trip to the country last month, and has threatened to sever military relations with Washington.

Malaysia, too, has seemingly begun to eye improving relations with the world's second-largest economy.

The prospect of an isolationist US under President Trump could quicken that trickle as the developing countries of Southeast Asia see Beijing -- with its fiscal largesse and huge consumer base -- as a better bet than a protectionist US.

Meanwhile, Trump's assertions that he will require Japan and South Korea to pay more for US defence assistance has led those countries, too, to worry about how the new presidency may reshape long-established relationships, said Rory Medcalf, head of the national security college at the Australian National University.

Blanket arrests

FROM PAGE 1
going into hiding Thursday night, locals say.

Brahmanbaria Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman claimed that attempts are being made to arrest the masterminds but they are not available in their houses.

"We are making sure that they can't flee the country."

The tea stall of Shipon is just opposite to the Livestock Hospital. Many in the area said he is the only breadwinner of his seven-member family and he always remains busy at his tea stall.

"I saw a police team came and asked all of us to shut down our shops. A few minutes later, a cop slapped Shipon and dragged him into their van though he was preparing to close his shop," said Papon, who has a grocery shop there.

When these correspondents went to the area on Thursday afternoon, Shipon's mother was seen running the stall.

"When I went to the police station, police said Shipon was arrested after examining video footage [of the attacks]. I have no idea how my son could be seen in the footage; he remains busy in the shop from morning till night," Jayeda Begum said, wailing.

Locals gathered there came up with the same statement.

The story of Polish is even more shocking.

"I always keep an eye on my pagol chhele since he started behaving unusually seven years ago. Everyone in this area knows that he has mental sickness. But police didn't listen to my plea," said Polish's father Sheikh Ahid Mia, 70, in his Datmondol house.

Mia, Police pulled him out from his bed and took him away," he said.

His mother went to Nasirnagar Police Station to see him. Police told her, "You don't need to see him here; you have seen him for many years."

When Ahid Mia met his son in Brahmanbaria jail, the mentally challenged youth was very rude to him.

Fifteen-year-old Morsalin works in a schoolbag factory in Manitola in Dhaka and came to his Datmondol house on Sunday night after about two months to see his parents, only to be arrested.

His brother Yasin, who works in the same factory, couldn't believe it. "My brother and I have been working and staying together since coming to Dhaka after Eid-ul-Azha."

When these correspondents visited Pukurpara area at Haripur village under Gokorno union, many women came forward to allege that police arrested their near and dear ones "without any evidence."

Panch Banu said police arrested her husband Yusuf Ali, 55, and son-in-law Khairul Mia, 35, early on Sunday.

She said Khairul came to the house to see his 20-day-old daughter on Saturday evening. "My rickshaw-puller husband told police that he [Khairul] works at a hotel in Dhaka and came here at night. But the policemen got angry, used abusive language and asked my husband to go with them."

With her daughter in her lap, Khairul's wife Rekha Begum said, "When I begged the police officials to show us a little mercy, they also used slang words and pushed me into the room."

The story of Taribul, 35, a truck driver at Madhabpur, is similar to Khairul's. He came to his house to see his 10-day-old child, said his wife

Minara, carrying.

A hawker in Dhaka, Rukel, came to his Gokorno village on Sunday to see his ailing father. He was arrested on Monday night.

Arma, a neighbour of Rekha, said her husband Rafiq Mia, a brickfield labourer, came to his house from Brahmanbaria on November 3 to attend a wedding ceremony scheduled for the following day.

"Entering our house, police wanted to know whether my husband's name is Rahim," she said.

"My husband said his name was Rafiq, not Rahim, but still police took my husband away," she added.

"What are they doing in the name of arresting the attackers? The incident took place on October 30 and my husband came two days after the incident. How could he be involved in the attack?" she said as tears rolled down her cheeks.

Rafiq's relative Alal, a trader in a kitchen market of Dhaka, was also arrested the same night.

According to his relatives, Alal also came on November 3 to attend the ceremony.

Relatives of Rafiq and Alal said both had told police that they came to their houses to attend the wedding ceremony.

They even took police to the house of Mafia, where the programme was being held. Mafia is the mother of the groom, who is a nephew of Rafiq.

"But police didn't listen to anyone," Arma said.

When his attention was drawn to the arrests of innocents, Officer-in-Charge of Nasirnagar Police Station Abu Jafar claimed that they were arresting people after identifying them from video footage of the incidents.

"We are making arrests based on evidence," he told The Daily Star at his office.

Particularly asked about the arrest of Shipon and mentally challenged Polish, the OC claimed they are "very careful and sincere" about carrying out drive to nab the attackers.

On the police failure to arrest the instigators who were seen speaking in the October 30 rally under the banner of Towhidi Janata, a Hefajat-e Islam-backed Islamist organisation, OC Jafar said, "Everyone will be arrested in time."

He also claimed police were trying to nab them but didn't find them in their houses.

Many participants of the rally attacked Hindu temples, according to locals.

About arresting innocents, SP Mizanur said, "Any arrestee, if found not involved in the attacks, will be freed."

MEN SLEEP IN PADDY FIELDS

Amid the police raids at night and blanket arrests, many men are not staying at their houses at night.

They have dinner early and leave houses with pillows and blankets to sleep in paddy fields nearby. They sleep in groups.

While visiting different areas over the last few days, these correspondents saw adult men, especially the youths, prepare to take shelter in nearby paddy fields.

"We sleep outside as we don't want to be arrested," said a young man at Datmondol village on Thursday evening.

Women who stay in houses at night with children feel unsafe. Incidents like looting houses and harassing women at night are reportedly taking place in different areas.

Team Trump already filled

FROM PAGE 1
New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Sessions as close advisers.

Lower level staffers assigned with crafting different departments are also heavily drawn from K Street, the centre of lobbying in Washington, and congressional staff, according to a staff organizational chart obtained by CNN.

Sources close to the operation say Sessions and the conservative Heritage Foundation have had a strong role in shaping the transition, in addition to staffers from the Bush administration, K Street and Capitol Hill.

At a Heritage Foundation event Thursday, John Yoo, a Berkeley Law professor and scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, got a warm reception from the crowd by cracking about the closeness.

"I'm surprised there are so many people here because I thought everyone at Heritage was working over at transition headquarters," Yoo said on the panel about Trump's win. "I asked the taxi cab driver to take me to Trump transition headquarters and he dropped me off here, instead."

The crowd let out an appreciative laugh.

Trump's policy is likely to be shaped largely by Republican stalwarts. Trump's policy positions throughout the election have been thinner than traditional campaigns, and he has

made contradictory statements at times or has changed his state policy goals amid criticism.

Meese told CNN that in general, the transition is going "very well," and suspected the heavy involvement from key Heritage personnel shows that his think tank will have a strong influence on Trump. With Trump having less experience in some areas of policy, he will have to draw on others' expertise to craft his positions, Meese said.

Early in the transition process, staff including Chairman Chris Christie held a series of meetings on K Street in Washington with different industry groups and key lobbyists.

Sources in those meetings said the conversations were top level, but when asked about specific policies, the transition team signalled they would be open to input from K Street.

In one financial services meeting, an attendee asked about Trump's past positions on reinstating Glass-Steagall, legislation that regulated banks. While the GOP platform called for reinstating Glass-Steagall and Trump's campaign manager at the time promoted it, Christie told the financial services lobbyists gathered that Trump is often open to changing his mind when he gets input from people with expertise.

Lobbyists around Washington feel that the Trump administration could be heavily influenced by their input, as

his campaign's policy positions were considerably thinner than Hillary Clinton's, and some of his promises could be open to interpretation.

It also helps K Street that the Republican Party is far from united on policy. Establishment Republicans and allies of House Speaker Paul Ryan expect Ryan's "Better Way" agenda to drive much of Trump's administration, as Ryan has been working to promote it for years in the House and has even toured the country touting it.

But social conservatives and farther right Republicans like the Heritage circle have seen hope in Trump's campaign promises and closeness with Sessions -- signalling hard-line positions on immigration and social issues.

Both sides are trying to influence his policy development and have representation on the transition team. Trump's Cabinet appointments could signal which way he's leaning.

A senior aide to Vice President-elect Mike Pence said that the former congressman would have a strong role in Trump's administration working with Congress and on legislation. But the aide also said that the transition would have to find people outside of Washington to staff the administration.

"This campaign was an outsider campaign. It would be foolish to go ahead and place a whole bunch of DC insiders into roles, right?" the adviser

said. "So it'll be a mix."

Trump is also competing with lobbying shops themselves for some of the top talent in Washington. Having prepared mostly for a Hillary Clinton presidency, Washington had been hiring Democratic talent. After Trump's surprising win, K Street is also trying to staff up with the best GOP policy staff from Capitol Hill and around DC.

James Wallner, group vice president of research at Heritage, said he is encouraged that Trump will heed the recommendations of his organization for two reasons. One is that their ideals line up with many of his campaign promises, and two is that Heritage has made an effort to craft all of their recommendations in an easy-to-use manner.

"You don't have time to digest a huge tome of material to have some moment of enlightenment to say, 'Oh I've figured out how to solve our health care problem.' You really need actionable type information that you can then process and make up your own mind on how to proceed and how to advise people to proceed," Wallner said.

"As long as President-elect Trump appoints people to this administration that are going to do things that are consistent with the promises he made while campaigning for this office that the American people clearly supported, then I'm optimistic about where we're going."

Spice output

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The annual production of spices (onion, garlic, ginger, turmeric, chilli, coriander, etc.) has now risen to over 18 lakh tonnes from a paltry 3.08 lakh tonnes in 1996, data from the Ministry of Agriculture show.

The amount is still far short of the annual demand in the country by about 14 lakh tonnes. The rest of the demand is met through imports. For example, the country imports five lakh tonnes of onion a year to meet domestic demand.

Yet, the rise in spices output is considered phenomenal.

Established in Bogra's Mahasthangarh in 1996, the SRC has been operating under the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI). BARI Director General Rafiqul Islam Mondal told The Daily Star, "The production of spices increased due to better breeds developed by the centre."

Spices can be cultivated with other crops on the same field and under the shade of big trees, said Rafiqul.

"For example, in a mango orchard, we can easily grow ginger or other spices considered high value crops. Spices can be cultivated in short time, with less investment," he added.

According to SRC, the centre has so far developed 31 high-yielding varieties of 14 spices which are now in production. The centre has successfully developed a number of spices, including garlic, onion, bunching onion, fenugreek, coriander, fennel, black pepper, black cumin, betel leaf, long coriander (Bilati Dhonia) and plum, locally known as alu bhokhara.

A total of five high-yielding varieties of ginger, fenugreek, and betel leaf are in the pipeline.

Other than the Bogra headquarters, the SRC has three regional spices research centres in Magura, Comilla and Gazipur, and four sub-regional centres in Lalmonirhat, Faridpur, Khagrachhari and Sylhet.

SRC Chief Scientific Officer (CSO)

Corruption

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Over one-fourth of the respondents said regular updates on public works and regular dialogue with citizens could help ensuring transparency of the government.

Asked what part of their life would change significantly because of technological developments in the next 10 years, majority of the youths mentioned job, study and travelling.

They noted that healthcare, education, agriculture, government and infrastructure development sectors would be benefited the most from the adoption of latest technologies.

The majority of the respondents considered salary, growth and impact on the society as three most important criteria for job opportunities. They said creating jobs, improving economy and livelihoods were the important contributions that businesses make to the society.

Asked whether there should be no religious expression in public spaces, 47 percent people said they disagreed with the view while 28 percent agreed.

Seventy-one percent respondents said they would welcome refugees to Bangladesh while 39 percent said

YOUTHS SPEAK UP

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INEQUALITY

Corruption & lack of transparency	68.5%
Access to good quality education	47.3%
Political ideologies	40%
Discrimination	35.9%

they would welcome refugees to their neighborhoods. Over 47 and 43 percent people said the government should apply selective migration measures to refugees and try to include them in the national workforce.

Iftekhazzaman said the youths identified the issues based on their experience and what they saw in the society. There is no scope for denying the issues, he added.

He called upon the government to look into the issues, taking the report positively.

Ruet closed

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The main purpose of this closure by the authorities is to avoid any further untoward incident, he said, adding that the dormitories will reopen on November 18 and classes or exams will resume the next day.

Requesting anonymity, a student said hostilities between the two rival groups of BCL at the Ruet escalated recently over theft incidents inside Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Hall and

Shaheed Abdul Hamid Hall.

Finally, on Thursday night around 9:00pm, the two groups locked horns with each other at Shaheed Abdul Hamid hall, leaving two students injured, he added.

Humyun Kabir, officer-in-charge of Motihar Police Station, said no one was arrested in connection with the incident and the situation was under control after additional police forces were deployed on the campus following the clash.