

# Tibetan leader urges Trump to confront China on rights

REUTERS, New Delhi

The head of the Tibetan government-in-exile said yesterday he was encouraged by US President-elect Donald Trump's tough stand on China and urged him to ditch backdoor diplomacy on furthering the Tibetan cause and be more confrontational.

The United States and its European allies have sought to engage China over allegations of repression since Washington reached out to Beijing back in the 1970s, effectively driving the Tibetan issue out of public forums, Lobsang Sangay said. But that approach had not worked and human rights abuses had only worsened, the Harvard-educated legal scholar told Reuters in an interview. Beijing had grown even more assertive, from threatening neighbours over the South China Sea dispute to repressing dissent in Hong Kong, he said.

"There is negligible or rather zero result as far as this 'quiet backroom dialogue' is concerned," Sangay said in the Tibetan bureau office in New Delhi.

"It's time for an open discourse where we press the Chinese government. We are not saying put sanctions, but that we be forthright, be frank on what's going on in Tibet and in China in general and to raise the issue.

## 7-murder

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Awami League General Secretary Yeasin Mia and his supporters were threatening her followers not to campaign and cast vote for her. Yeasin is known as a close aide to Nur Hossain, the prime accused in the seven-murder case.

Beauty said she received an anonymous letter a few days ago that asked her to quit the election race and not to push ahead with the seven-murder case. Otherwise, she would have to face death like her husband, it added.

"I informed the police and election officials about the letter and filed a general diary with Siddhirganj Police Station. I fear whether voters would be able to cast their votes freely," she told The Daily Star.

"I am contesting the polls just to fulfill my late husband's dream of making the ward free from drugs trade. I want to complete the unfinished works of my husband," the councillor hopeful said.

Beauty had won the by-election to the ward following the killing of her husband over two and a half years ago. Talking to this correspondent, Yeasin denied the allegations against him.

"Why should we threaten her [Beauty] campaigners?" he questioned.

Rafiqul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Siddhirganj Police Station, said the anonymous letter was sent to Beauty from Tejgaon of Dhaka. The police were investigating the incident, he added.

Twenty-seven wards of Narayanganj City Corporation will go to polls on Thursday.

## Incoming UN

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his tenure, which begins January 1. Women currently fill less than one in four leadership positions at the United Nations.

A senior Brazilian foreign ministry official, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, will serve as Guterres's chief of staff, while Kyung-wha Kang of South Korea was appointed to the new position of special adviser on policy.

Amina Mohammed was widely tipped to become UN deputy secretary-general after she led successful negotiations on the sustainable development goals - 17 targets agreed by the United Nations to end extreme poverty by 2030.

The 55-year-old Mohammed will succeed Jan Eliasson of Sweden.

Viotti, who is Brazil's undersecretary for Asia and the Pacific, also served as ambassador to Germany and as UN envoy.

The 62-year-old economist helped shape Brazil's role within the BRICS club of emerging economies and worked as director for human rights in the foreign ministry.

Kang, 61, is currently head of Guterres's transition team and has served as deputy UN aid chief since April 2013.

Guterres, a former prime minister of Portugal who led the UN refugee agency for 10 years, won election as UN chief despite calls from civil society and some member-states for a woman to be chosen for the first time in the organization's 71-year history.

He said after taking the oath of office on Monday that "gender parity is a must" and "will become a clear priority from top to bottom in the UN."

Guterres will succeed former South Korean foreign minister Ban Ki-moon, who led the UN through two five-year terms.

## Life in tents

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evicted from the land of Sahebganj-Bagda farm in Gobindaganj, Gaibandha, on November 6.

Their homes were torched and vandalised during the eviction drive, conducted by police and Rangpur Sugar Mills staff.

More than a thousand of them have since been living in makeshift camps in nearby Madarpur and Joypur villages.

"We need more tents to accommodate all the homeless people," said Rafayel Hasda, an indigenous community leader, as these correspondents visited the areas on Thursday.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society provided 408 tents to them, he added. Those who didn't get any of the tents have to huddle together in makeshift ones.

None of the arrangements is enough in bone-chilling weather at night.

"My two-month-old daughter Urmila has been suffering from cough and cold for the last 10 days. I can't afford to take her to doctor," said 30-year-old Parvin Tudu.

It was noon on Thursday. Urmila

## Victory Day

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able to materialise the 'vision' within the stipulated time by utilising our huge human resources and information technology."

He hoped that coordinated efforts of everyone would turn Bangladesh into a hunger- and poverty-free prosperous "Sonar Bangla" (Golden Bangla) as dreamt by Bangabandhu, reports UNB.

In her message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called upon people to get involved in building a hunger- and poverty-free "Golden Bangladesh" as dreamt by the Father of the Nation.

After the country's independence, then Soviet Union had assisted Bangladesh in reviving its economy. Their major contribution was to sweeping mines at Chittagong Port in 1972-1974 when more than 800 mariners took part in the job, said a press release.

Four former Soviet Navy officers along with their spouses are in Bangladesh to celebrate the Victory Day. They witnessed the parade yesterday and are scheduled to visit Chittagong today.

National flags were hoisted atop all government and private buildings yesterday, while the government and semi-government structures and other public places were illuminated and roads and islands in all cities were decorated with flags and festoons.

The Bangladesh embassies and high commissions abroad began the day by hoisting the national flag. It was followed by discussions, cultural programmes and special prayers seeking salvation of the departed souls of Liberation War martyrs, according to press releases.

Special prayers were offered at mosques, temples, churches, pagodas and other places of worship, seeking divine blessings for peace and progress of the country.

Destitute children were allowed to visit the Shishu Park in the capital's Shahbagh free of cost. Special meals were served in jails, hospitals, orphanages and vagrant homes across the country.

Different organisations including the Liberation War Museum, Chhayanaut, Bangla Academy, Shilpakala Academy, Bangladesh Shishu Academy, Sector Commanders Forum, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Ekattorer Ghatik Dalal Nirmul Committee, Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka Officers Club, National Museum, Nazrul Institute, Kachi Kanchar Mela and Mahila Parishad observed the day holding discussions, candlelight vigils, musical soires, street dramas, painting shows and poetry recitation sessions.

Blood donation programmes, photo exhibitions and sports competitions also organised at Dhaka, Jahangirnagar and Rajshahi universities.

## 20 teachers

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During the match, Mokhles expelled a group of rowdy locals, led by Mushtaq, who became involved in a brawl with the students.

Enraged, Mushtaq later in the evening physically assaulted the teacher while the teacher was going home.

Hearing the news, agitated students started to gather near their institute on Friday morning to demand Mushtaq's arrest, said OC Azmul, adding that at one stage the students and teachers blocked traffic on the highway.

Police had to club the crowd with truncheons after they ignored police's request to clear the highway and allow traffic movement, he said.

The demonstrators then locked in clashes with the police for about an hour and police fired rubber bullets when the students attacked them with sticks and stones, he claimed.

The students and teachers injured during the incident were undergoing treatment at Magura Sadar Hospital. A few of the injured teachers were identified as Sudipto Kumar Singho, Rakibul Hasan, Babul Kumar Palit and Biddut Ali.

Sajal Mondol, Idris Ali, Sagar Imam and Ibrahim Hossain were identified among the injured students.

Munir Hossain, principal of the polytechnic institute, demanded immediate investigation into the

was asleep on straws inside a tent with her mother sitting beside her.

Many other children are also suffering from cold-related illness, Parvin said.

Tetu Tudu, 60, approached one of these correspondents and asked, "Sir, can you please tell us for how long we have to live like this?"

The old man said they have got food from the government and some individuals but are facing an acute shortage of cash.

Meanwhile, a fresh panic has broken out among the Santals after the barbed-wire fence around the disputed land was found damaged on Tuesday morning despite deployment of a huge number of police in and around Madarpur and Joypurhat.

Santals fear they will be blamed for this and harassed by police again.

The mill authorities had installed 300 pillars and put up the barbed-wire fence. The Daily Star found around 30 of those pillars uprooted.

The Santals say criminals did this by using tractors.

The Bangladesh Postal Service issued five commemorative postage stamps, two first-day covers, two data cards and a souvenir, marking the 46th Victory Day.

'ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION' While celebrating the day, common people urged political leaders to work for elimination of discrimination from the society and run the country in the spirit of Liberation War.

"It is very distressing when we notice that only some people are enjoying all types of state facilities and the majority are still struggling to earn their livelihood. Definitely, our freedom fighters didn't dream of such a society. We want the state to ensure a balanced society for the future generations," Elias Khan, a private employee, told The Daily Star.

Asaduzzaman, 28, a post-graduate from a public university, said it was frustrating that some corrupt people were using fake freedom fighter certificates for their own benefit.

"Our freedom fighters are our real heroes. This independent country is a gift from them where we are enjoying our lives. I request the government to take stern action against faking freedom fighter certificates," he added.

Tea seller Jahangir Hossain, 55, expressed worries over the "political instability" in the country.

"The freedom fighters had liberated the country to unite the nation. Unfortunately, we are now witnessing polarisation of people due to dirty politics," he said.

In Chittagong, the district administration accorded a reception to 150 freedom fighters at Chittagong Circuit House.

The day was celebrated in a befitting manner in Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Sherpur, Bagerhat, Narsingdi, Feni and other districts.

## Venezuela stuck in currency limbo

AFP, Caracas

Venezuelans lined up Thursday to deposit 100-unit banknotes before they turned worthless, but replacement bills had yet to arrive, increasing the cash chaos in the country with the world's highest inflation.

Some frustrated customers received expiring 100-bolivar notes when they withdrew money at ATMs, then immediately had to line up again to re-deposit them.

Venezuelans are stuck in currency limbo after President Nicolas Maduro ordered the 100-bolivar note -- the largest denomination, currently worth about three US cents -- removed from circulation in 72 hours.

unjustified use of brute force on the demonstrators by the police.

The police could have averted the incident if they assured the demonstrators of arresting the attacker, he added.

Magura Police Superintendent Munibur Rahman said police already arrested the alleged attacker and process was underway to file a case against him.

"We are investigating the firing of rubber bullets by police," he added.

## 3 of a family

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passengers of the human haulier. They were being treated at the Dulahazra Malumghat Christian Memorial Hospital and the Chittagong Medical College Hospital, said police, adding that two of the victims died on the spot while the other two died on their way to the hospital.

The dead are Mohammad Kalu, 45, of Kutubjurm union of Maheshkhali, his 17-year-old daughter Rina Akhter, Kalu's mother-in-law Kala Khatun, 50, and Mohammad Raihan, 23, of Purba Nijpankhali area of Chakaria municipality area.

Sergeant Ashique Rahman of Malumghat Highway Police Camp said they seized both of the vehicles after the accident, but the drivers escaped.

## Bangladeshi

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and his father, Zakir Hossain, were on the way to a hospital in Kolkata.

Police said Shibbrata lived in Baghchara village, but settled in Habra a couple of years ago.

As Shibbrata and Zakir knew each other, Zakir and his son stayed at Shibbrata's house at Habra when the two went to India for Zakir's treatment on Monday.

The next morning, Shibbrata, Zakir and Mohsin headed for a Kolkata hospital. But Shibbrata left them on the way, saying he had an urgent job.

Later, four to five criminals intercepted the two and kidnapped Mohsin. The gang then phoned Shibbrata and demanded a ransom of Tk 15 lakh for Mohsin's release.

Suspecting that Shibbrata was involved, police interrogated him, and he admitted to his involvement in the incident.

A case was filed with Habra Police Station in connection with the abduction.

## 2 suspects

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He added that the two had a dispute over an alleged misappropriation of money from Chang's business.

Following the dispute, Nazmul along with Mukhtar hit Chang on the head with an iron rod and then strangled him to death, Anisur told The Daily Star.

The duo then left the body inside a toilet at the warehouse of the Chinese national's business in New Town area and fled.

When Chang's wife Li Ing, who lives in the capital's Uttara, could not reach him over the phone, she called Nazmul who told her that Chang had gone missing.

On Li's instructions, Nazmul went to Kotwali Police Station to inform police about the matter.

Suspecting his involvement in the crime, police detained Nazmul immediately. Based on his information, police then detained Mukhtar. Both of them later admitted to police that they had murdered Chang, police said.

Chang had been running his import business of electric autorickshaw batteries in Jessore for the last couple of years.

## UN gets reports

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"If the authorities have nothing to hide, then why is there such reluctance to grant us access? Given the continued failure to grant us access, we can only fear the worst."

UN human rights spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani said the UN human rights office had submitted a formal request for access to the area, which had not yet been granted.

Adrian Edwards, a spokesman for the UN refugee agency UNHCR, said more than 1,000 refugees had arrived in Bangladesh in the past few weeks, bringing accounts of houses being burned, targeting of civilians and traumatised women and children who had witnessed the killing of family members.

UNHCR could not verify the accounts first-hand but it was extremely concerned and it urged the Myanmar authorities to investigate and the government of Bangladesh to give the refugees a safe haven, he said.

Zeid said in June this year that crimes against humanity may have been committed and if the government did not handle the situation very carefully and address the grievances of the Rohingya minority, violence could ensue, Shamdasani said.

"Unfortunately this is exactly what has happened in the past couple of months," she added. "We are worried that this is going to get further out of hand. This is perfect breeding ground for violent extremists."

## It was a time

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"I was so emotional. I told him to write to me every day. He promised that he would do so," said Veena, who is now 74.

Her husband kept his promise. "I have treasured those letters because I was newly married."

"He sent letters with the help of civilians. I used to get those after a gap of 10 days," she said, adding that she would probably never discover that her husband is a good writer if he had not joined the war.

"Today, I feel very fortunate. After Bangladesh's victory, my husband told me stories about the Liberation War, the Mukti Bahini and the Indian army's role," said Veena.

Promila Vardhan, wife of Indian war veteran Lt Col (ret'd) Harsh Vardhan, said the family faced a great deal of uncertainty after her husband joined the war on November 23 in 1971.

"We could not know what was happening in Bangladesh. It was very tough for the family," she said.

The people of both the countries must know what the two nations did for each other during the war so that the bond between them gets stronger, she said.

"They should not forget the kind of friendship India and Bangladesh have. It is very important for both the generations to pass this on."

# Brazil's Lula faces new corruption charges

AFP, Brasilia

New corruption charges linked to Brazil's massive embezzlement scheme at Petrobras oil company were filed Thursday against former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, prosecutors said.

A judge will now have to decide whether Lula, whose spokesman called the charges "invented," should face trial.

The Workers' Party founder is already set to be tried in other cases, with the mounting scandals likely to wreck the once hugely popular leftist leader's chances of a political comeback at elections in 2018.

In the latest case, federal prosecutors accused Lula of taking bribes from the construction giant Odebrecht in the forms of an apartment and land on which to build his Lula Institute think tank in Sao Paulo.

Odebrecht is the company at the heart of a massive embezzlement and bribery scheme at Petrobras, Brazil's most important state enterprise.

Dozens of politicians have been accused of taking bribes from Odebrecht and other construction companies to line their own pockets and boost party campaign funds in exchange for facilitating inflated contracts for the companies with Petrobras.

Eight others, including the former head of Odebrecht -- Marcelo Odebrecht -- are named alongside Lula in the latest complaint, in which prosecutors allege a total of 75 million reais (\$22.1 million) in bribes linked to eight Petrobras contracts.

Lula "is accused of practicing the crimes of passive corruption and money laundering," the federal prosecutors' service said in a statement. His wife, Marisa Leticia Lula da Silva, is accused of money laundering.

Lula's representative Jose Chrispiniano said that corruption prosecutors investigating the Petrobras affair "have invented a new story for their obsessive quest to paint the ex-president as responsible for the embezzlement."

Lula had already been ordered to stand trial for alleged corruption and money laundering in the pay-to-play scandal. He will also stand trial for obstruction of justice.

## Evacuation from Aleppo

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But yesterday morning it was abruptly suspended, with the government accusing rebels of violating the terms of the accord.

"The evacuation operation has been suspended because the militants failed to respect the conditions of the agreement," a security source told AFP.

State television said: "The terrorist groups violated the agreement and tried to smuggle heavy weapons and hostages from east Aleppo."

The International Committee of the Red Cross, which has supervised the evacuation, confirmed it was on hold.

The opposition accused the government of suspending the operation in a bid to secure the evacuation of residents from two villages under rebel siege.

"The regime and its militias... stopped the evacuation operation in another attempt to involve Fuua and Kafraya," said Yasser al-Youssef of the Nureddin al-Zinki rebel group.

The Shia-majority villages in Idlib province have been besieged since 2015.

The government and its other main ally Iran have reportedly sought to add an evacuation of civilians from the villages to the terms of the Aleppo deal.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor, also said the suspension appeared to be related to the two villages.

It said pro-government fighters were blocking the road out of Aleppo that the evacuation convoy had been using and rebels were refusing the evacuation of residents of Fuua and Kafraya.

The evacuation of the last pocket of rebel territory in Aleppo began on Thursday under a deal brokered by Russia and Turkey.

It had been scheduled to begin on Wednesday, but was delayed because of government objections, including over Fuua and Kafraya.

Clashes resumed for several hours before the deal was revived, and on Thursday afternoon buses and ambulances began transporting evacuees to rebel territory in the west of Aleppo province.

The Observatory estimated some 8,500 people had left before the operation was suspended, including around 3,000 rebels. Syrian state media reported a figure of around 8,000.

Ahmad al-Dbis, a doctor helping coordinate the evacuation of the wounded, said at least 500 evacuees had wounds or illnesses requiring attention.

The departures began a month to the day after government forces launched a major offensive to retake all of Aleppo and secure the regime's biggest victory in more than five years of conflict.

An outsized figure of the Latin American left, Lula has said he is willing to run for office again in 2018 and polls show he would be a frontrunner, despite the increasing cloud of corruption.

However, he has lost the once heady ratings he enjoyed during his 2003-2010 presidency and is blamed on the right for the country's mounting economic woes.

His successor Dilma Rousseff was impeached and removed from office earlier this year for violating budget rules and his Workers' Party was trounced in recent municipal elections.

Marcelo Odebrecht has already been convicted on earlier charges and was sentenced to 19 years in prison. However, he and nearly 80 other executives from his company are currently cooperating with prosecutors in a plea bargain to get reduced sentences.

Their testimony, alleging participation of top politicians in the bribery scheme, is expected to set off more political bombshells in Brazil. The current president, Michel Temer, is among those being named in the testimony, according to Brazilian media reports.

## Indian govt releases email id for black money info

TNN, New Delhi

The Indian government yesterday urged people to take advantage of the last window for disclosing black money and make declarations under the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana that opens today even as it sought information from public on those trying to hide their money.

"We want people to join the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana and through this scheme they can contribute to the welfare of the people," revenue secretary Hasmukh Adhia said.

The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) provides for 50 percent tax and surcharge on declarations of unaccounted cash deposited in banks. Declarants also have to park a quarter of the total sum in a non-interest bearing deposit for four years.

In a video message to Syrians on Thursday, President Bashar al-Assad said the "liberation" of Aleppo was "history in the making".

The developments came after western powers mobilised to come to the aid of civilians in Aleppo and step up pressure on Syria's allies, Russia and Iran, to end the carnage.

The UN Security Council will meet behind closed doors yesterday to discuss the crisis in Aleppo.

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson summoned the Russian and Iranian ambassadors in London to convey his "profound concern" over their countries' role in the "suffering" of the people of Aleppo, the Foreign Office said.

European Union leaders in Brussels also strongly condemned the offensive in Aleppo carried out by the forces of President Bashar al-Assad and his allies.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said what had already happened in the city was "unconscionable", raising concerns for the "tens of thousands of lives that are now concentrated into a very small area of Aleppo".

It is unclear how many people remain in east Aleppo, with tens of thousands fleeing to territory held by the government or Kurds in recent days, but perhaps tens of thousands are still inside.

The evacuations have been emotional for departing residents desperate for relief after months of bombardment and siege, but also tearful at the prospect of potentially permanent exile.

In the dust of one bus window Thursday someone had traced: "One day we will return".

"The scene was heart-breaking," said ICRC Syria head Marianne Gasser.

"People are faced with impossible choices. You see their eyes filled with sadness."

More than 310,000 people have been killed since the conflict began with anti-government protests in 2011, and over half the population has been displaced, with millions becoming refugees.

Diplomatic efforts -- including several rounds of peace talks in Geneva -- failed to make headway in resolving the conflict, which reached a turning point last year when Russia launched an air war in support of Assad.

Yesterday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow was "actively negotiating" with rebels via Turkish mediators.

"The next step (after Aleppo) will be to reach agreement on a complete ceasefire across all of Syria," he said in Japan.

He added that the parties were proposing fresh peace talks, possibly in Kazakhstan.