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SHAH CEMENT

COERCIVE ABORTION

Trump strikes

US stops funding for UNFPA over 'erroneous claim'

REUTERS, United Nations

The State Department said on Monday it was ending US funding for the United Nations Population Fund, the international body's agency focused on family planning as well as maternal and child health in more than 150 countries.

In a letter to US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker, the State Department said it was dropping the funding because the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) "supports, or participates in the management of, a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization."

The cut marks US President Donald Trump's first move to curtail funding for the United Nations and is likely to raise further questions about how deep those cuts will eventually go throughout the organization, where the United States is the top donor.

It comes after Trump in January reinstated the so-called Mexico City Policy that withholds US funding for international organizations that perform abortions or provide information about abortion.

Known by critics as the "global gag" rule, Trump broadened its scope to include all global health assistance in his Jan 23 executive order that withholds at least half a billion dollars in US funds. A lack of clarity around the rule, however, has left aid groups scrambling and both Republican and Democratic US lawmakers seeking clarity.

In a statement on its website, UNFPA said it regrets the US decision to end funding, which it said is based on an "erroneous claim" that the agency supports coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization in China.

UNFPA said its mission is "to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled."

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Sri Lanka opener Kusal Perera guided his side to a six-wicket victory over Bangladesh with a fantastic 53-ball 77 in the opening T20I at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

facebook

It won't be blocked at all

Says Tarana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Posts and Telecommunications Tarana Halim yesterday said Facebook would not be blocked even for an hour.

"...the government has not taken any decision in this regard. We have already conveyed the message to the cabinet division," she told reporters during a media briefing at her secretariat office in Dhaka.

"This government has shown people how to use

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SIBL Social Islami Bank Limited

PRAYER TIMING APRIL 5

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-45 6-21 7-45
JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 5-00 6-24 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Upbeat about all but Teesta

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali yesterday said a lot of issues would come up for discussion during the prime minister's India visit and it would not matter if the Teesta water sharing deal was not one of them.

The government would make details of the much-talked-about defence deal public if it was signed, he told a press conference at his ministry ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's April 7-10 visit.

This was the first official statement by the minister about the PM's tour.

He said 33 deals and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were likely to be signed between the two countries during the PM's visit.

Most of the deals would be on setting up of border haats, information and broadcasting, nuclear assistance for civil purpose, science and technology, information and communications technology, satellite and space research, geological science, defence assistance, a line of credit, setting up of community clinics and assistance in power and energy sectors.

About the proposed deal on defence cooperation, the foreign minister said, "You all will see once it takes place. Nothing will be kept secret, everything will be disclosed in time."

"What our critics have been saying regarding the proposed defence deal, there is nothing in it like that," he told reporters.

On the Teesta water sharing deal, he said: "So many

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No interference

IPU adopts resolution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inter-parliamentary Union yesterday adopted a resolution calling for non-interference in any country's internal affairs.

The 18-point resolution, however, allows intervention when a state fails to protect its people from "incitement to commit, and the commission of, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing".

In the resolution, titled "The role of parliament in respecting the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of states" was jointly placed by Russia and Cyprus in a session of the five-day 136th IPU assembly that began on Saturday at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

In a session of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, 44 states voted in favour of the resolution and 10 voted against it.

Countries that voted for the resolution include Bangladesh, Russia, China, Cyprus and Kenya.

The 10 countries that voted against it were Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and Ukraine. Belgium refrained from voting.

The resolution underlined the role of parliaments in preventing external intervention that threatened states' sovereignty and independence. The first point of the resolution says, "The principle of refraining from the threat or use of force and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states are part of the fundamental pillars of international law and international relations."

The resolution also stressed the responsibility of parliaments to strengthen democracy, promote, protect and encourage respect for human rights, support dialogue, encourage the peaceful settlement of internal dispute, take all necessary action to consolidate national unity and peaceful negotiation among different sectors of society.

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BANGLADESH BANK HEIST Digital proof for North Korea link

Says Kaspersky Lab

REUTERS, Toronto

Cyber security firm Kaspersky Lab on Monday said it had obtained digital evidence that bolsters suspicions by some researchers that North Korea was involved in last year's \$81 million cyber heist of the Bangladesh central bank's account at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Russian-based Kaspersky released a 58-page report on Lazarus, a group linked to the heist in Bangladesh and the 2014 attack on Sony's Hollywood studio, which the US government blamed on North Korea.

Among its findings, the report said Lazarus hackers made a direct connection from an IP address in North Korea to a server in Europe that was used to control systems infected by the group.

Kaspersky researcher Vitaly Kamuk told Reuters by telephone that the finding marked "the first time we have seen a direct connection" between North Korea

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Chinese engineer builds 'wifebot'



MAIL ONLINE

Fed up after years of searching for a human spouse to no avail, a Chinese engineer has 'married' a robot.

Zheng Jiajia is a 31-year-old artificial intelligence expert, and built his future 'wife' at the end of last year, according to the South China Morning Post (SCMP).

Named Yingying, the bizarre robot can identify Chinese characters and images, and even say a few simple words, and the creator has plans to upgrade the bot so she'll one day be able to walk and do chores around the house.

The pair 'married' on Friday in a simple ceremony in which the robot was adorned with a traditional red scarf over her head.

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1 killed, 30 injured in tornado

Over 1,000 houses, crops damaged in Faridpur, Pabna

STAR REPORT

A man was killed and 30 others were injured as tornadoes hit Faridpur Sadar upazila and Pabna's Sujanagar on Monday evening.

Over 1,000 houses along with crops and trees were damaged by the storm in the two districts.

In Faridpur, a man was killed and more than 700 houses along with crops were affected as a storm swept through 12 villages in four unions of Sadar upazila, reports our correspondent there.

The deceased is Abdul Jalil Chokidar, 60, of Chandipur village.

The unions are Machhchar, North Channel, Decree Char and Char Madhabdia.

Yunus Ali, a former member of Machhchar union, said a tree fell on Jalil when he was going to

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People of Chargobindopur in Pabna's Sujanagar try to salvage their possessions yesterday after a tornado levelled their village. At least 30 people were injured and several hundred houses destroyed when the tornado hit five villages in the upazila Monday evening. Inset, an uprooted tree. PHOTO: STAR

Russian metro blast a possible suicide attack

Say investigators; attacker identified as Kyrgyz national with radical links; St Petersburg mourns 14 dead

AGENCIES

The St Petersburg metro explosion was caused by a bomb possibly detonated by a man whose body parts were found on the train, Russian investigators said yesterday.

The blast between two metro stations on Monday killed 14 people and injured 49.

Kyrgyzstan's security service named the suspect as Akbarzhon Jalilov, who was born in the Kyrgyz city of Osh in 1995 and had obtained Russian citizenship.

His name was later confirmed by Russian investigators, who said he also planted a second bomb that did not explode.

The perpetrator had radical Islamist links, Russian media cited law enforcement officials as saying, raising the possibility the attack could have been inspired by Islamic State, which has not struck a major city in Russia before, reported Reuters.

Russians laid flowers and tributes at memorials and a three-day period of mourning has begun yesterday.

The explosion took place between the Sennaya Ploshchad and Tekhnologicheskyy Institut stations at about 2:40 pm on Monday. Photographs from the scene showed bandaged and bloodied bodies being carried from the station where the train came to a stop.

Others showed bodies lying by the train itself at Tekhnologicheskyy Institut as the station filled with smoke.

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