



A Rohingya refugee carries bamboo at the Mayner Ghona camp near Cox's Bazar yesterday to build a house.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Chinese billionaire wants regime change in Beijing

AFP, New York

From a luxury Manhattan apartment, Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui is plotting a "change of the regime" in Beijing and developing a new media platform with the aim of introducing democracy in the world's most populous country.

The fugitive real estate mogul settled in April in New York, on the 18th floor of a hotel facing Central Park, where he's now waiting with his wife for a decision on his claim for US political asylum.

"I want to try and to have rule of law, I want to try and have democracy, freedom, that's my ultimate goal... A change of the regime," he told AFP in a recent exclusive interview. He's set a timeline of three years.

For several months, Guo has been flooding social networks with searing accusations of corruption against China's rich and powerful.

Few Chinese tycoons choose dissent. But Guo, whose property was seized and two brothers imprisoned since he fled from China in 2014, says his campaign has been brewing for 28 years.

Amid the crackdown on pro-democracy protesters on Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, "my little brother died in front of me... I was detained for 22 months."

It was in prison that he decided to "wrestle with this system under the Communist party that is inhumane, not democratic, unlawful."

While some accuse the businessman, who is not shy about publicizing his ostentatious lifestyle, of hypocrisy in his allegations of corruption among China's political elite, Guo denies accusations that he himself is also guilty of graft.

"Why would I do this? I don't need the money, I have money," he said, ticking off possessions such as apartments in New York and London and a yacht, as well as "a wonderful family."

NRBC bank

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management committees. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Tamal said the restructuring was done with the support of all directors, including the bank's former chairman Farasath Ali.

Last week, the central bank issued an order for removing Mujibur from the post of MD. Later, the High Court stayed the BB order.

Shakib

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Mushfiqur led the country in 34 Tests from October 2011 and under his stewardship Bangladesh won seven Tests, lost 18 and drew nine. It will be Shakib's second Test captaincy stint after having been captain for nine Tests from July 2009 to August 2011. Bangladesh won one and lost eight of those nine Tests.

The changes come after Chandika Hathurusingha, head coach of the cricket team from July 2014 to October 2017, tendered his resignation midway through the recent South Africa tour. Bangladesh lost all seven international matches on the ill-fated tour.

The BCB is also currently looking for a coach and it is unlikely that one will be appointed in time for the series against Sri Lanka, which will be held in the additional time after Hathurusingha was appointed their head coach last week.

Tokyo to invest

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be mobilised. Syed Afsor H Uddin, chief executive officer of the PPP Authority, and Yasuki Kaibori, deputy minister of Japan's land, infrastructure, transport and tourism ministry, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Japan in June.

"The PPP Authority will first identify infrastructure projects such as highways, ring roads, subways, and economic zones after having discussions with the ministries concerned," an official of the PPP Authority told this newspaper yesterday.

"The joint management platform will then select a project for implementation.

After the selection, the company will carry out a feasibility study."

Japan has been providing Bangladesh with nearly \$2 billion as soft loans every year since fiscal 2012-13.

Apart from this, Tokyo will invest under the new arrangement, and Japanese banks will help with financing, said PPA Authority officials.

They also said the PMO last month sought the finance ministry's opinion on the new arrangement. And the ministry gave a positive feedback, saying there will be quality work under such projects.

Recently, China has pledged around \$21.5 billion for large infrastructure projects in Bangladesh. Chinese companies will implement the projects.

Besides, India has committed around \$7 billion. Indian companies will get work through selected bidding. And 65 to 75 percent of the materials to be used in the projects will be imported from India.

AFP, Cairo

In Egypt's eastern desert, roads are being carved across vast expanses of sand where the government is building a new administrative capital, a long-cherished project that has failed in the past.

The city will be complete with luxury hotels, upscale residential districts, a modern airport and a 345-metre (1,140-foot) tower, touted as Africa's tallest.

The work is being carried out about 45 kilometres (28 miles) east of Cairo, between roads connecting the metropolis to the canal city of Suez and the Red Sea resort town of Ain Sokhna.

Workers are building a district to house a new presidential palace, parliament, 32 ministries and foreign embassies.

"I work more than 12 hours a day on this useless construction site," complained one labourer, a scarf wrapped around his head to protect him from the sun.

"You want to be on TV? No? Then get back to work," yelled his supervisor.

The project, seen as expensive and not a priority for Egyptians, has been hard to sell, especially given past failures.

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in 2015 announced the project to build a new capital, expected to cost some \$45 billion and to be completed by 2022, according to the authorities.

The cost has angered many in a country with a crisis-hit economy. The first phase of construction was officially launched in October, with the new capital aiming to expand to 170 square kilometres (65 square miles) and house over six million people.

In a report published on December 8, Nikkei Asian Review, a financial newspaper of Japan, said Tokyo reached an understanding with Dhaka to build highways and other structures in Bangladesh under an exclusive arrangement.

Japan seeks to capitalise on this and other opportunities to surpass China, which has a much larger infrastructure footprint in developing countries due to its huge edge in pricing, it said.

"For instance, the Chinese accounted for 55 percent of Africa's infrastructure projects in 2015, compared with Japan's slim 1 percent market share. In the Middle East, China had a 17 percent share compared with Japan's less than 2 percent," mentioned the report.

The Chinese are ahead in other parts of the world as well, such as Asia, Oceania and Europe.

With many of the Chinese projects delayed or revised, the Japanese government is trying to seize what it sees as a good opportunity to catch up, it added.

In a policy speech last month, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Japan's infrastructure exports increased by 10 trillion yen (\$89 billion) in five years.

Still, the Chinese and South Koreans continue to enjoy pricing and political advantages over Japan.

Every house

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"Considering the growing demand of power, we're moving to diversified sources of power production. We're now getting power from solar, nuclear, coal and oil-based sources alongside importing electricity from India to meet the demand."

Hasina said the country is now producing 16,150MW of electricity and 83 percent people of the country enjoy electricity.

PM's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-E-Elahi Chowdhury and State Minister for Power and Energy Nasrul Hamid also spoke at the programme.

After the inaugural programme, the PM talked to a cross-section of people via videoconference.

Communist

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centrist Nepali Congress party of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who heads a loose alliance that includes the Madhesi parties from Nepal's southern plains and former royalists, against the tight-knit alliance of former Maoists and the moderate Communist UML party.

The Nepali Congress party is considered a pro-India group, while the opposition alliance is seen as closer to China.

Nepal is a natural buffer between the two and the outcome could indicate whether China or India gets the upper hand in the battle for influence in a nation rich in hydropower and home to Mount Everest.

Nepal emerged from a civil war in 2006 and abolished its 239-year-old Hindu monarchy two years later.

Guna Raj Luintel, editor of the daily Nagarik, said it was almost certain the leftist alliance would win.

"Trends so far suggest they could win a two-thirds majority. If that happened, that will be a landslide win," Luintel said.

There are 165 seats to be decided on a first-past-the-post basis for which voting was held on Thursday with another 110 seats decided by proportional representation.

Few results are in from the southern plains, home to nearly half of the population, and communists are thought to have weaker support there.

Transcom Group

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Pakistan and former prime minister of Bangladesh.

Khan had been associated with Transcom since 1993. He was an important member of the senior management team of Transcom Group, said a press release.

He also served as a member of the executive committee of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and was a former vice-president of Bangladesh Employers' Federation.

He left behind his wife, son and two grandchildren.

He will be buried at Banani Graveyard following his namaz-e-janaza at Gulshan Azad Masjid after Zohr prayers tomorrow (December 12).

BSF shot dead

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consignments of cattle from their Indian counterparts.

The BSF members of Diar Manik Char of Indian Murshidabad district claimed that they opened fire after the smugglers from both countries swooped on three BSF members at the border, Shamim said quoting BSF officials.

The BSF claimed that an Indian citizen also received bullet injuries.

BGB recovered the body of Esharul Islam from inside Bangladesh territory. The body was later sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

BSF members recovered the body of Nasrat from the barbed wire fence and agreed at the flag meeting to return it.

The flag meeting took place in Kodalkati area around noon. Lt Col Shamim led BGB team while BSF 4 Battalion commander Amrit Singh led the BSF team.

Meanwhile, Ain o Salish Kendra yesterday condemned the killing of two Bangladeshis by the BSF.

In a press statement, the rights body also urged Bangladesh and India to take immediate initiatives to stop border killings.

Police accuse

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Hearing the person's scream, market staffers surrounded the men and asked for their identity, the trader added.

The men, who had no police gear, identified themselves as detectives with only one showing his ID. The agitated staffers thought the lone ID was fake, he said.

"We had asked the plainclothes men to come to our association office, talk to the leaders and clarify the charges against Majharul," said the trader.

The traders said the crowd let the policemen take away Majharul after Officer-in-Charge Kazi Mainul Islam of Ramna Police Station assured them of the men's identity.

During a visit to the market yesterday, this correspondent found all businessmen were scared as two cases were filed. None of them wanted to talk to media.

In the case statements, police claimed that the CITC team along with Ramna police had raided the market and had showed their ID cards.

Maruf Hossain Sarder, deputy commissioner of police (Ramna Division), said the cases were filed in connection with the assault on police and creating obstacle to police duty.

"We are investigating to identify the attackers and bring them to book," he told The Daily Star.

Tk 20,000cr lost a year

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and metal smelters seven percent.

Another major problem is lead. Nearly 600,000 people living in 59 hotspots in Dhaka and its adjacent areas are exposed to lead contamination.

The study identified 20 battery recycling areas, 23 lead smelting hotspots and four multiple industries and industrial estates as the main sources of lead-induced pollution.

Lead can cause neurological damage, especially among children, at any detectable level, it said, noting that mean blood lead levels are at 14-15ug/dl in Dhaka's industrial areas.

The report also found that just to produce one tonne of fabrics, the dyeing and finishing factories discharge 200 tonnes of wastewater into rivers leading to health hazards in the capital's poorer neighbourhoods.

There are a total of 719 such washing, dyeing and finishing factories in and around Dhaka, it mentioned.

The cities also suffer from waterlogging due to heavy rainfall. They are vulnerable to flood because of wetland encroachments and lack of waste management.

On October 22 this year, just 233mm of rainfall inundated 60 percent area under the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) of Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) and 27 percent of developed areas.

It is not only the case of the capital. For example, Pabna, which has lost nearly half of its wetlands since 1990, faces prolonged waterlogging.

The report, to be launched early next year, focused on four areas: cost of environmental degradation, urban wetlands, cleaner technologies and institutions.

It recommended that the government should incorporate wetlands into urban planning and invest in waste management to improve the cities' resilience.

The study also suggested enforcing environment policies and strengthening institutions.

It said the government should provide incentives to industries to adopt green and clean technologies and enforce polluter's pay principle--a practice that those who are responsible for pollution should bear the costs of managing it.

As Bangladesh is rapidly urbanising, the report suggests that the country needs to manage the urbanisation and industrialisation process in an environmentally sustainable way.

"When growth comes at the cost of environment, it cannot sustain. The good news is that we have seen it is possible to grow cleaner and greener without growing slower," said Zahid Hussain, World Bank's acting country director for Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh must plan and act now to prevent environmental degradation and ensure climate resilience."

Anwar Hossain Manju, minister for environment and forests, was present on the occasion as the chief guest. Many other policy makers, government officials, environmentalists, urban planners, and civil society representatives attended the programme and discussed the findings of the report.

Egypt reveals

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Since Kampp's discovery, "both tombs were left untouched" an Egyptian archaeological mission started work.

Antiquities Minister Khaled al-Enany was in Luxor to announce the discovery in Draa Abul Nagaa necropolis near the famed Valley of the Kings, where many pharaohs, including Tutankhamun, were buried.

In addition to funerary items, archaeologists found "a mummy wrapped in linen", the ministry said, adding that "studies suggest the mummy could be for a top official or a powerful person".

The owner is unidentified, though the ministry said they have two possible identities.

The tomb might belong to "a person named Djehuty Mes whose name was engraved on one of the walls", the ministry said.

Or it could belong to "the scribe Maati as his name and the name of his wife Mehi were inscribed on 50 funerary cones found in the tomb's rectangular chamber".

The other tomb was not excavated and only "uncovered" in April, the ministry said, adding that the tomb's owner is not yet known.

"The tomb has a court lined with stone and mud-brick walls. It has a six-metre (-yard) deep burial shaft at its southern side that lead to four side chambers," the ministry said.

"Studies reveal that the tomb was reused in antiquity," it said.

The tomb contains several artefacts and a depiction of "a person, probably the deceased's brother, presenting offerings and flowers to the deceased and his wife".

President leaves

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tension in the Arab-Israeli conflict following Donald Trump's contentious recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to leave for France this morning to attend the One Planet Summit, an event where global leaders will assemble for discussing funding for the fight against climate change.

She is going to Paris at the joint invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim. The PM would reiterate Bangladesh's support for the Paris Agreement and present a positive attitude towards participating in international cooperation to address climate change.

Additionally, the PM will hold a bilateral meeting with the French President.

In another development, Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim will arrive in Dhaka for a two-day official visit to Bangladesh on December 19-20.

Announcing the three visits at a press briefing, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said Dhaka is considering the visits "significant" as these will strengthen bilateral ties and on the other hand Dhaka will be able to play an important role in the OIC and climate summits.

PRESIDENT TO VISIT TURKEY

As per the programme schedule, President Hamid will leave for Istanbul at 10:35pm today by a Turkish Airlines flight on a three-day visit to attend the special emergency Islamic leaders summit which was called by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The meeting comes at the heels of the US recognising the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital on December 6 and planning to move the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv.

The President will accompany a 45-member delegation, which includes State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam and other high officials drawn from the President's Office and different ministries. Turkey holds the chairmanship of the OIC now.

The summit meeting on December 13 will be preceded by the meetings of the senior officials and foreign ministers of OIC member countries tomorrow. The President will return to Dhaka on Thursday morning.

Dhaka has already expressed deep concern at Washington's announcement and stressed on preserving the

legal status of Jerusalem within the framework of relevant UN resolutions. Bangladesh also reaffirmed its position in favour of establishing the State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 border with East Jerusalem as its capital, Foreign Minister Ali said.

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO FRANCE

Around 50 heads of state and government are expected to participate in the summit in Paris on Tuesday, which aims to launch a new drive to mobilise money needed worldwide to combat climate change.

The French President, President of World Bank Group and the UN Secretary-General will address the summit.

They are expected to press wealthy nations to increase funding and urge investors worldwide to turn their backs on polluters in a bid to accelerate efforts to combat global warming.

US President Trump weakened the Paris Agreement in June when he said the United States, the world's second biggest greenhouse gas emitter, after China, would pull out. But other world leaders responded at the time not to give up the fight against climate change.

As per the programme schedule, an Emirates flight carrying the Prime Minister and her entourage will leave Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 9:55am today.

At a press conference, Foreign Minister Mahmood Ali said the Prime Minister and other global leaders will discuss seven specific issues, including carbon neutral alliance, alliance on boycotting coal, climate funding, said the Foreign Minister.

He hoped that the global leaders will make new commitments during the conference on climate issues.

The Prime Minister will hold a bilateral meeting with the French President tomorrow morning which will help strengthen their relations and expand areas of cooperation between the two countries. Hasina visited France in September 1999 and May 2011.

She will also join lunch to be hosted by the French President for the heads of state and government, co-organisers and VIPs of the summit at Elysee Palace.

On Tuesday evening, the Prime Minister will attend a High Level Segment of the One Planet Summit at La Seine Musicale. After returning from the Summit, the PM will join a reception of expatriate Bangladeshis at her place of residence.

The Prime Minister will return home on December 14.