

NEWS IN BRIEF

China confirms four died in June clash on India border

China's defence ministry yesterday named four soldiers killed in a brawl with Indian forces last year, the first confirmation of deaths by Beijing from the border clash that also killed at least 20 Indian soldiers.

US reaffirms 'strategic defence partnership' with Saudi

Washington has reaffirmed its 'strategic defence partnership' with Riyadh in the face of increased attacks by Yemeni rebels but the move came in a call from the Pentagon not the White House.

Press freedom fears as Malaysia fines news site

A leading Malaysian news site was fined \$120,000 yesterday over readers' comments that criticised the judiciary, sparking concerns about worsening press freedom and a flood of international condemnation.

India criticises UN experts over Kashmir

India has criticised UN rights experts for voicing concerns about constitutional changes made in the Muslim-majority territory of Kashmir, where militants have been fighting for independence for three decades.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



DEADLY US COLD WAVE

A person walks through the snow in New York, on Thursday. A historic winter weather system that brought bitter, record-busting cold to much of the southern and central US was pushing up the East Coast on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Lift all sanctions for talks Says Iran as it reacts coolly to US negotiation offer

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran will "immediately reverse" actions in its nuclear programme once US sanctions are lifted, its foreign minister said yesterday, reacting coolly to Washington's initial offer to revive talks with Tehran aimed at restoring the 2015 nuclear deal.

President Joe Biden's administration said on Thursday it was ready to talk to Iran about both nations returning to the accord, which aimed to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons while lifting most international sanctions.

It also lifted restrictions imposed on Iranian diplomats in New York.

Tehran said Washington's move was not enough to persuade Iran to fully respect the accord.

When sanctions are lifted, "we will then immediately reverse all remedial measures. Simple," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Twitter.

Since Trump ditched the deal, Tehran has breached the accord by rebuilding stockpiles of low-enriched uranium, enriching it to higher levels of fissile purity and installing advanced centrifuges to speed up production.

Tehran and Washington have been at odds over who should make the first step to revive the accord. Iran says the United States must first lift Trump's sanctions while Washington says Tehran must first return to compliance with the deal.

However, a senior Iranian official told Reuters that Tehran was considering Washington's offer to talk about the revival of the deal.

"But first they should return to the deal. Then

within the framework of the 2015 deal, a mechanism to basically synchronise steps can be discussed," the official said. "We have never sought nuclear weapons and this is not part of our defence doctrine."

The European Union is working on organising an informal meeting with all participants of the Iran deal and the United States, which has already



signalled willingness to join any gathering, a senior EU official said yesterday.

Adding to pressure for a resolution to the impasse, a law passed by the hardline parliament obliges Tehran on Feb 23 to cancel the sweeping access given to UN inspectors under the deal, limiting their visits to declared nuclear sites only.

World powers urged Iran to refrain from taking the step, which will complicate Biden's efforts to restore the pact.

While Iran's demand for a lifting of all US sanctions is unlikely to be met anytime soon, analysts said, Tehran faces a delicate choice about how to respond to Biden's overture with an upcoming presidential election in June.

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Injured protester dies in Myanmar

Protests continue as international pressure grows on military

REUTERS

A young woman protester in Myanmar died yesterday after being shot in the head last week as police dispersed a crowd, her brother said, the first death among opponents of the Feb. 1 military coup since demonstrations began two weeks ago.

News of the death came as baton-wielding police and soldiers broke up a procession of people carrying banners of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi in the northern town of Myitkyina and thousands returned to the streets of the main city of Yangon.

Mya Thwate Thwate Khaing, who had just turned 20, had been on life support since being taken to hospital on Feb. 9, after she was hit by what doctors said was a live bullet at a protest in the capital, Naypyitaw.

Protesters set up a shrine for her on a pavement in Yangon, with pictures, flowers and the flag of Suu Kyi's party. Yesterday marked two weeks of daily demonstrations against the military's seizure of power and its detention of veteran democracy campaigner Suu Kyi.

As well as the protests, a civil disobedience campaign has paralysed much government business and international pressure is building on the military.

Britain and Canada announced new sanctions on Thursday and Japan said it had agreed with India, the United States and Australia on the need for democracy to be restored quickly.

The junta has not reacted to the new sanctions. On Tuesday, an army spokesman told a news conference that sanctions had been expected. There is little history of Myanmar's generals giving in to foreign pressure and they have closer ties to neighbouring China and to Russia, which have taken a softer approach than long critical Western countries.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Merin Academy, Chittagang, featuring a ship and two officers. Text includes: 'বাংলাদেশ মেরিন একাডেমি, চট্টগ্রাম সহ সরকারি/বেসরকারি মেরিটাইম শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে মেরিন ক্যাডেট প্রশিক্ষণ কোর্সে ভর্তির সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি'.

Advertisement for 2021-2022 Nautical/Engineering Cadet Recruitment. Text includes: '২০২১-২০২২ সালের নটিক্যাল/ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ক্যাডেট হিসেবে যোগ দিন' and 'নিম্নবর্ণিত মেরিটাইম শিক্ষা/প্রশিক্ষণ প্রতিষ্ঠানে ২০২১-২০২২ সালে ক্যাডেট ভর্তির জন্য অনলাইনে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:'.