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CRISIS IN MYANMAR

Willing to engage with all parties

Says China as anti-coup protesters defy ongoing crackdown; official from Suu Kyi's party beaten to death

REUTERS

China is willing to engage with "all parties" to ease the crisis in neighbouring Myanmar and is not taking sides, the Chinese government's top diplomat State Councillor Wang Yi said, as thousands of anti-coup demonstrators defied an ongoing military crackdown yesterday.

Beijing has said the situation in Myanmar, where the military seized power last month, was "absolutely not what China wants to see" and has dismissed social media rumours of Chinese involvement in the coup as nonsense.

"China is ... willing to contact and communicate with all parties on the basis of respecting Myanmar's sovereignty and the will of the people, so as to play a constructive role in easing tensions," Wang told a news conference on the sidelines of China's annual gathering of parliament yesterday.

While Western countries have strongly condemned the February 1 coup, China has been more cautious, emphasising the importance of stability.

"China has long-term friendly exchanges with all parties and factions in Myanmar, including the National League for Democracy (NLD), and friendship with China has always been the consensus of all sectors in Myanmar," Wang said.

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Women hold a candlelit vigil at the Central Shaheed Minar at the first hour of today to mark the International Women's Day. They also observed a minute of silence. Amrai Pari Paribarik Nirjaton Protirodh Jote, an alliance against domestic violence, organised the event.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

She could only watch as racing buses crushed her mother

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A daughter watched her mother being crushed to death between two buses, the drivers of which were competing to get ahead, at an intersection in Gulistan yesterday.

Witnesses said the tragic incident happened around 1:00pm when the deceased, Parveen Begum, 48, and her daughter Suraiya Akhter were crossing the road to catch a Munshiganj-bound bus to return home.

Parveen Begum arrived in Dhaka from Munshiganj for her daughter's treatment.

Talking to reporters, Suraiya, who was also trapped between the buses but managed to escape in the nick of time, said she came to Dhaka with her mother in the morning to visit Shaheed Suhrawardi Medical College Hospital.

"From the hospital, we boarded a bus which dropped us in Gulistan. As we were crossing the road near Golap Shah Mazar to catch a bus home, we were trapped between two buses," Suraiya said.

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ATTEMPTED MURDER SC clears way of trial of magistrates, ex-DC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A lower court can now continue the trial proceedings of a case that accused former Kurigram deputy commissioner Sultana Parvin, three executive magistrates, and several ansar members of attempting to murder a journalist in March, 2020.

The Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for the lower court concerned.

The SC dismissed a leave to appeal petition, filed by one of the executive magistrates Nazim Uddin, that challenged the trial proceedings of the case.

Nazim's petition sought stay on the proceedings, saying that a departmental proceeding had already been initiated against him and he was not involved in assaulting journalist Ariful Islam.

The bench of the Appellate Division of the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Tikka Khan refused oath

MARCH 8, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN



TIKKA KHAN REFUSED THE OATH OF OFFICE

Tikka Khan was handed over responsibilities of both the governor and martial law administrations in East Pakistan. He was also the commander of Eastern Command. However, the all-powerful governor could not find a judge to swear him in as Justice BA Siddiqui, chief justice of the East Pakistan High Court, refused to administer the oath for "reasons of ill health".

The martial law officer in Dhaka tried to make alternative arrangements but failed. According to the president's legal parchment, the swearing in ceremony must be administered by the chief justice of the concerned province. His nominee or a local judge of the Supreme Court cannot perform the task. General Tikka himself rang up the chief secretary of East Pakistan, Shafiqul Azam, to arrange the ceremony but he also refused. [Siddiq Salik, Witness to Surrender, UPL 1997, pp.55-56]

This was powerful evidence of the success of the non-cooperation movement and the disassociation of the Bangalee public from military rule. [Richard Sisson and Leo E Rose, War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh, UCP, 1990, pg. 102]

NEW AL DIRECTIVES

Awami League, virtually in control of East Pakistan, SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Youth stabbed to death as 'gangs' clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

A 20-year-old was stabbed to death during a clash between two "gangs" in Bayezid Bostami area of Chattogram city last night.

Deceased Md Emon was the son of Nur Kashem of Muktijoddha Colony in the Bayezid Bostami area, said Shah Alam, assistant commissioner (Bayezid Bostami Zone) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

Alam said the clash occurred at Muktijoddha Colony intersection around 8:30pm between Pistol Sohel gang and Ali gang.

Emon, a member of the Pistol Sohel gang, was stabbed by his rivals during the clash, our Chattogram correspondent reports, quoting the police official.

He was taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, added the AC.

Locals, however, claimed that the two groups were factions of Bangladesh Chhhatra League.

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FREEDOM FIGHTERS' LIST To be released on Mar 26

Says liberation war affairs minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque said yesterday that a list of freedom fighters that is not "debatable" will be released on Independence Day on March 26, when the country will start celebrations of its golden jubilee of independence.

He also hoped the "revised" list of Razakars will be released before Victory Day this year.

"We will publish the list of those who face no questions or debates as freedom fighters on March 26," Mozammel told reporters after inaugurating two buses of the "Travelling Liberation War Museum" in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan.

"Those who were left out during the scrutiny have applied for settlement of the objection. We will add their names later if they can prove themselves as freedom fighters," the minister added.

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 8

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-15	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30
JAMAAT 5-50	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A group of workers hired by Rapid Acton Battalion uprooting opium plants at Bonkhur village under Dinajpur's Joypurhat Sadar upazila. A group of local farmers had planted the illegal crop on around five acres of land. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

TRIAL FOR COVID TREATMENT

Oral drug yields promising data

Say US, Germany drugmakers; Biden Covid rescue plan clears Senate

AGENCIES

German pharmaceutical giant Merck and a US partner reported promising results Saturday in trials of a drug administered orally to fight Covid-19, saying it helps reduce patients' viral load.

"At a time where there is unmet need for antiviral treatments against SARS-CoV-2, we are encouraged by these preliminary data," said Wendy Painter, chief medical officer of the US firm, Ridgeback Biotherapeutics.

In January, Merck halted work on two Covid vaccine candidates but has pressed on with research into two products to treat the disease, including a pill-based one called molnupiravir, which it has developed with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics.

This drug caused a significant drop in patients' viral load after five days of treatment with it, Merck said at a meeting with infectious disease experts.

This Phase 2a test -- drug trials have three stages before a product can be approved -- was carried out among

202 non-hospitalised people with symptoms of Covid-19.

There was no alert in terms of safety, and of four serious adverse events that were reported, none were considered to be related to taking this drug, Ridgeback said.

Anti-viral oral drugs such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza) are sometimes prescribed for seasonal flu but researchers have yet to come up with something similar to fight the coronavirus.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Good is the new currency

We are living in a world where money can have two impacts: it can be negative, or it can be used as a force for good. At Standard Chartered, we choose to stand for good. We value people, the planet and profits, and we are taking the lead to become the world's most responsible and sustainable bank.

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