



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is welcomed by European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell ahead of meeting in Brussels, Belgium, on Wednesday.

US won't force allies to take sides against China

Says Blinken as he offers shared vision with EU

AGENCIES

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has vowed a new approach to work closer with allies, promising Washington would not force them to take sides against China.

The United States and the European Union also agreed to relaunch a bilateral dialogue on China and work together to address Russia's "challenging behavior," according to a joint statement on Wednesday.

Blinken and the EU high representative for foreign affairs, Josep Borrell, "acknowledged a shared understanding that relations with China are multifaceted, comprising elements of cooperation, competition, and systemic rivalry."

"When our allies shoulder their fair share of the burden, they'll reasonably expect to have a fair say in making decisions," Blinken said at Nato headquarters in Brussels.

"We will honour that -- that begins with consulting our friends, early and often."

The wide-ranging speech on his first official trip to Europe marked a dramatic shift under President Joe Biden from the combative approach of predecessor Donald Trump.

It comes a day before Biden joins a video

summit with EU leaders to press home the message that his administration wants to rebuild transatlantic ties.

Biden is keen to take a multilateral approach as he looks to enlist Nato allies and the EU in a united front of democracies to the authoritarian challenge of China.

"The United States won't force our allies into an 'us-or-them' choice with China," Blinken said.

America's top diplomat insisted "there's no question that China's coercive behaviour threatens our collective security and prosperity. ... But that doesn't mean countries can't work with China where possible, for example on climate change and health security."

The US and EU took a first step towards joint action against Beijing by unveiling synchronised sanctions on Monday over the crackdown on the Uyghurs in China.

But Brussels irritated Biden's team by agreeing an investment deal with Beijing weeks before he took office.

During their meeting in Brussels, the two pledged to work together as well on the global distribution of safe and effective coronavirus vaccines, and to ensure they are prepared for future pandemics.

Saudi official denies death threat made to UN investigator

AFP, Riyadh

A Saudi official yesterday denied he threatened UN investigator Agnes Callamard following her probe into journalist Jamal Khashoggi's 2018 murder, after the United Nations confirmed she was issued a death threat.

At a meeting with UN officials in Geneva in January 2020, a senior Saudi official threatened twice to have Callamard "taken care of" if she was not restrained by the United Nations, the Guardian newspaper reported this week.

Without naming the Saudi official, Callamard -- the UN's special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions -- told the British newspaper that the comment was perceived by her Geneva-based colleagues as a "death threat".

Awad Alawwad, the head of Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Commission, yesterday said Callamard and UN officials believed he had made the threat.

"I reject this suggestion in the strongest terms," Alawwad wrote on Twitter.

Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the UN Human Rights Office in Geneva, confirmed that "the details in the Guardian story about the threat aimed at Agnes Callamard are accurate".

Khashoggi, a Saudi insider-turned-critic who wrote for The Washington Post, was killed and dismembered inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Callamard's report, published in June 2019, concluded that there was "credible evidence" that top Saudi officials, including Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, were liable for the killing.

ANTI-COUP PROTESTS IN MYANMAR

Four more shot dead

REUTERS

Myanmar security forces fired at pro-democracy activists taking part in street demonstrations yesterday, killing at least four people, news reports said, a day after a nationwide silent strike in protest against last month's military coup.

Four people were killed in the town of Taunggyi in central Myanmar in the shooting, the Myanmar Now news portal said.

Thousands of people held street protests in the commercial capital Yangon, the central city of Monywa and several other towns, according to witnesses and social media posts.

Police fired at a street demonstration in the city of Mawlamyine and arrested 20 people, the Hintha Media Corp said. At least two people were injured, it said.

Other media outlets reported at least five people sustained bullet wounds when security forces opened fire on protests in other towns. Reuters could not independently verify the reports.

Five more people were wounded overnight in Mandalay, Myanmar Now reported. A 16-year-old man died after being shot in the back, it said.

UK sanctions business interests of Myanmar military in joint move with US

At least 286 people have been killed since the Feb. 1 coup in the crackdown on protests, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) activist group.

In a sign of growing international pressure, the United States on Wednesday said it would impose sanctions on two conglomerates controlled by Myanmar's military.

Meanwhile, Britain yesterday imposed the business interests of Myanmar's military, in a move coordinated with the United States.

The British foreign ministry said it would target military-owned conglomerate Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd, citing serious human rights violations against the Rohingya and its association with senior military figures.

The funeral of a seven-year-old girl killed on Tuesday, the youngest known victim of the crackdown, took place on Wednesday in Mandalay.

The junta has tried to justify the takeover by saying a Nov. 8 election won by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) was fraudulent - an accusation the electoral commission has rejected. Military leaders have promised a new election but have not set a date and have declared a state of emergency.

MIGRANT INFLUX IN US

Harris put in charge to tackle crisis

AFP, Washington

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday tasked Vice President Kamala Harris with tackling an influx of migrants on the Mexican border, aiming to take charge of a situation that has energized opponents of the new administration.

"I can think of nobody who is better qualified to do this," Biden said at a White House meeting with Harris and other top officials as thousands flee violence in impoverished Central America.

"When she speaks, she speaks for me," Biden said, adding: "I give you a tough job."

Harris said there was "no question that this is a challenging situation."

It marks the first time that Biden has assigned a specific portfolio to Harris, who is seen as representing a younger generation in the Democratic Party and has been constantly at his side since they entered office on January 20.

The convention center will accommodate up to 1,400 children, said a spokesperson for the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Speaking earlier to CBS News, Harris acknowledged that the United States needed to speed up its processing of migrants' asylum claims and care better for them.

"It's a huge problem. I'm not going to pretend it's not," Harris said in the interview.

She also vowed a greater effort to address the "root causes" of the border situation -- helping the so-called Northern Triangle of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua so its people do not feel they need to flee.



Extinction Rebellion activists hold pictures of Myanmar's military coup victims during a protest in front of Total headquarters, in La Defense business district, near Paris, France yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



স্বাধীনতার সুবর্ণ জয়ন্তী

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ও ৩০ লাখ শহীদের ত্যাগের বিনিময়ে অর্জিত স্বাধীনতার সুবর্ণ জয়ন্তীতে তাঁদের প্রতি বিনম্র শ্রদ্ধা।

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড (বিডিবিএল)

একটি রাষ্ট্র মালিকানাধীন বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক

৮, রাজউক এভিনিউ, মতিবিল, ঢাকা

ফোন: ৯৫৫৫১৫১-৯

Website: www.bdbi.com.bd, SWIFT Code: BDD88DDH



স্বাধীনতার সুবর্ণ জয়ন্তী

১৯৭১-২০২১

২৬ মার্চ

মহান স্বাধীনতা ও জাতীয় দিবসে আমাদের প্রাণঢালা শুভেচ্ছা

বৃন্দার ব্যাংক

Mercantile Bank Securities Limited

Mercantile Exchange House (UK) LTD

MBL Asset Management Limited

মার্কেটবিল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড

Mercantile Bank Limited

১৬২২৩

www.mercantilebank.com

www.mercantilebank.com

www.mercantilebank.com

সম্মানিত গ্রাহকদের সেরা সেবায় অগ্রিম বিনামূলিতে মার্কেটবিল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড দ্বারা প্রদত্ত। (২০১৯-২০২০)



PROUD TO BE A COMPANION IN THIS TRIUMPH OF RED AND GREEN

Unilever