



PHOTO: REUTERS

Warns Beijing as Nato declares China a security challenge for the first time

AFP, Beijing

Beijing yesterday slammed Nato over a “completely futile” warning in which the group said for the first time in a guiding blueprint that China’s power challenges the military alliance.

The response came after Nato's strategic concept, published at a summit in Madrid, said Beijing's stated ambitions and coercive policies challenged its interests, security and values. Nato also said that China's close ties to Russia went against Western interests, drawing a fiery response from Beijing.

"Nato's so-called new strategic

concept document disregards facts, confuses black and white... (and) smears China's foreign policy," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said yesterday.

Nato, whose guiding document was updated for the first time since 2010, also accused China of targeting its members with “malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric”.

Zhao hit back, saying that China did not pose “the systemic challenge imagined”. Instead, he said, it was Nato that is a “systemic challenge to world peace and stability” and its “hands are stained with the blood of the world’s people”.

REUTERS, Guwahati

At least seven people have died and another 55 are feared to have been killed after a massive landslide in a remote area of the north-eastern Indian state of Manipur, local officials said yesterday.

Rescue workers battled heavy rains and inclement weather to pull out nineteen survivors from the rubble yesterday morning after the landslide occurred at a railway construction site in the early hours.

"In all there were about 81 people. The chances of survival of the remaining 55 people are very thin considering the fact that the landslide occurred around 2 a.m.," Haulianlal Guite, district magistrate of Noney district in Manipur, where the accident occurred, told Reuters by telephone.

This month unprecedented rains have lashed India's north-eastern states and Bangladesh, killing more than 150 people. Millions have been displaced by the catastrophic floods in recent weeks, and in some low lying areas houses have been submerged.

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about 20 waiters rushing back and forth inside the ritzy café with a wood-and-stone facade and a sprawling garden facing the lake.

By 8:00pm, the tables were mostly occupied by expatriates -- a group of Italians and another of Japanese -- while a few Bangladeshis were also dining.

None, however, had any idea of the horrors that would befall a relatively tranquil evening.

It was around 8:45pm when the diners heard a loud sound like that of a

firecracker. What happened next was beyond their wildest dreams.

Shouting "Allahu Akbar", five young men brandishing weapons, including semi-automatic rifles, grenades and machetes, burst into the eatery and started attacking indiscriminately.

Shrieks and screams immediately pierced through the air

Panicked and bewildered, the diners ducked under tables and scurried about for safety. The attackers held the diners who could not get out of their reach and sorted out the non-Muslims by a grim test of reciting verses from the Holy Quran.

"You don't have to be scared. We will not kill the Muslims. Lay your heads down on the table," they said.

The worst-ever hostage crisis then began to unfold before the nation.

It wasn't until the next morning, around 12 hours later, that para commandos broke the siege, killing five attackers and a chef.

What they found at the scene were traces of mindless butchery, with the restaurant's floor strewn with bodies and blood.

Twenty hostages, including 17 foreigners, were brutally murdered, while two police officials and the chef of the restaurant were also killed in the standoff.

People stood aghast at the extent of terror not seen ever before in Bangladesh.

During the bloodbath, a young man, only 20, stood out as an example of courage, friendship, and humanity.

Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, who was at the cafe, could have walked free but refused to abandon the friends he was there with. He chose to stay with them even in the face of death.

A student of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia in the US, Faraaz and his friends Abinta Kabir, a US citizen of Bangladeshi origin and of

Bangladesh origin and of the same university, and Tarishi Jain, an Indian student of the University of California, Berkeley, were among those killed.

The Gulshan attack, carried out by IS-inspired outfit known as Neo JMB, formed by a faction of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), served as a wake-up call for the government and triggered

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odds at home and abroad.

Earlier on June 27,

Road Transport and Bridges minister Obaidul Quader at parliament said, "Bangladesh Bridge

Authority will repay
all the loans given by
the government in 140
quarterly instalments

in 35 years with the toll collected from vehicles using the Padma Bridge.”

The bridge inaugurated on June 25 connects 21 south-western districts with Dhaka.

The PM yesterday said the bridge would be particularly beneficial to the country's economy. "We believe we

will improve a lot.”

The rail lines, river training, the rising costs of land and several other factors had increased the cost of the Padma Bridge.

The budget session was prorogued yesterday with 20 sittings. A total of 228 MPs spoke for 36.36 hours on the 2022-23 budget.

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