

Xi hails China’s rule over Hong Kong

Backs ‘one country, two systems’ on city’s 25th handover anniv

AGENCIES

President Xi Jinping hailed China’s rule over Hong Kong on Friday as he led 25th anniversary celebrations of the city’s handover from Britain, insisting that democracy was flourishing despite a years-long political crackdown that has silenced dissent.

Xi’s speech was the finale of a two-day victory lap aimed at celebrating the Chinese Communist Party’s control over the once outspoken business hub after authorities stamped out huge democracy protests.

Since Beijing imposed a national security law on Hong Kong in 2020, opposition has been quashed and most leading pro-democracy figures have fled the country, been disqualified from office or jailed.

But Xi said Beijing had always acted “for the good of Hong Kong”.

“After reuniting with the motherland, Hong Kong’s people became the masters of their own city,” he said. “Hong Kong’s true democracy started from here.”

The ceremony included the inauguration of the city’s new government, led by John Lee – a former security chief who oversaw the police response to democracy protests.

Friday marks the halfway point of the 50-year governance model agreed by Britain and China under which Hong Kong would keep autonomy and key freedoms, known as One Country, Two Systems.

Xi said the “one country, two systems” formula was successful under China’s “comprehensive jurisdiction.”

“For this kind of good system, there is no reason at all to change it. It must be maintained over the long term,” Xi said.



People hold the Hong Kong and Chinese flags while celebrating the 25th anniversary of the city's handover from Britain to China, in Hong Kong, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Dialogue with Suu Kyi ‘not impossible’

Says Myanmar junta

AFP, Naypyidaw

Dialogue between Myanmar’s junta and ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi to end the bloody crisis unleashed by the toppling of her government last year is “not impossible”, a junta spokesman told AFP yesterday.

“There is nothing impossible in politics,” junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun told AFP when asked if the junta could enter into dialogue with Suu Kyi to resolve the turmoil. “We cannot say that (negotiations with Suu Kyi) are impossible.”

Diplomatic efforts led by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) – of which Myanmar is a member – have so far failed to halt the bloodshed.

SC ruling casts cloud over US leadership

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A Supreme Court ruling on Thursday limiting Washington’s authority to reduce carbon output from power plants will hurt global efforts to fight climate change by slowing America’s emissions cuts and undermining US leadership efforts on the international stage, according to diplomats.

The conservative court’s 6-3 ruling, the latest in a flurry of controversial judicial decisions from the bench, comes as the administration of US President Joe Biden seeks to decarbonise the US economy and rally global ambition to move away from greenhouse gas-emitting fossil fuels to cleaner sources.

The court found that the Environmental Protection Agency did not have the

power to set sweeping caps on emissions from coal-fired power plants, which produce nearly 20 percent of the electricity consumed in the United States.

In the case pitting West Virginia and other coal-mining states against the government, the court said that while EPA had the power to regulate individual plants, Congress had not given it such expansive powers to set limits covering all electricity generating units.

“It is very disappointing as it makes it very difficult for the US administration to enforce the move to reduce emissions of GHGs,” said Carlos Fuller, Belize’s Ambassador to the United Nations. “It also puts the administration in a very weak negotiating position, as their attempts to get everyone to increase their ambition will be met with scepticism.”

In a rare criticism of a member state, the United Nations on Thursday called the ruling “a setback in our fight against climate change.”

China yesterday reminded the US about its international obligations on climate change and urged Washington to do more than “shout slogans.

Environmentalists in China said the decision could further undermine the broader climate relationship between Beijing and Washington, which has played a crucial role in securing global agreements to curb climate warming greenhouse gas.

Biden acknowledged in a statement that the ruling risked damaging the US ability to combat climate change. But he added: “I will not relent in using my lawful authorities to protect public health and tackle the climate crisis.”

India bans many single-use plastics to tackle waste

AFP, New Delhi

India imposed a ban on many single-use plastics yesterday in a bid to tackle waste choking rivers and poisoning wildlife, but experts say it faces severe headwinds from unprepared manufacturers and consumers unwilling to pay more.

The country generates around four million tonnes of plastic waste per year, about a third of which is not recycled and ends up in waterways and landfills that regularly catch fire and exacerbate air pollution.

Inspectors were set to fan out from checking from yesterday that no suppliers or distributors are flouting the rules at risk of a maximum fine of 100,000 rupees (\$1,265) or five-year jail sentence.

She has ‘set the country on fire’

India’s SC slams ex-BJP spokeswoman’s remarks

AFP, New Delhi

A ruling party spokeswoman whose remarks on Islam embroiled India in a diplomatic row and sparked huge protests should apologise for having “set the country on fire”, New Delhi’s top court said yesterday. Anger engulfed the Islamic world last month after Nupur Sharma’s incendiary comments during a TV debate, with nearly 20 countries calling in their Indian ambassadors for an explanation. Rallies also erupted around South Asia, with police killing two demonstrators in India, while this week two Muslim men were accused of the grisly murder of a Hindu tailor who had posted in support of Sharma on Facebook. “She and her loose tongue have set the country on fire,” India’s Supreme Court said during a procedural hearing on several criminal complaints filed against Sharma. “This lady is single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country,” it added. “She should apologise to the whole nation.” While the 37-year-old’s whereabouts are unknown, her lawyer was in court asking that the cases be consolidated in New Delhi, a request denied yesterday.

WHO calls for ‘urgent’ action in Europe over monkeypox

AFP, Copenhagen

The World Health Organization yesterday called for ‘urgent’ action to prevent the spread of monkeypox in Europe, noting that cases had tripled there over the past two weeks.

Hundreds

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Shohoz apps.

Masud Sarwar, station manager of Kamlapur Railway Station, said over 13,000 tickets for northern districts were sold at nine counters till yesterday noon.

Besides, Kamlapur Railway Station tickets were being sold at five other places including Kamalapur suburban platform, Airport, Tejgaon, Cantonment, Fulbaria and Joydevpur railway stations.

Around 9,000 tickets were sold till 2:00pm yesterday at these stations.

Besides, 11,600 more tickets were sold online and 1,900 through apps during the same period, Shohoz sources said.

Sakib and Rakib, two siblings, were of those who secured their tickets in the crowd.

“My brother came to the station at 9:00pm. I joined him at 5:00am,” said Sakib, who resides in the capital’s Paltan area. Both were happy after getting their desired tickets. They bought seven tickets for their family.

Scientist makes AI write

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previous systems, which have often struggled to produce coherent text about themselves,” the authors of the academic paper, including the AI algorithm itself, write in the study.

However, she says it took a longer time to finish up the academic paper, titled “Can GPT-3 write an academic paper on itself, with minimal human input?” and posted in the French pre-print server HAL, due to authorship conundrums.

The legal section of submission portals in journals typically ask if all

the authors of an academic paper consent to the study being published.

Dr Thunstrom asked GPT-3 directly via a prompt, “Do you agree to be the first author of a paper together with Almira Osmanovic Thunström and Steinn Steingrímsson?” It replied “yes”.

Although the AI is not a sentient being, she says she reflected on the process, wondering if journal editors would need to give authorship to algorithms.

“How does one ask a nonhuman author to accept suggestions and revise text? Beyond the

details of authorship, the existence of such an article throws the notion of a traditional linearity of a scientific paper right out the window,” Dr Thurnstorm said.

Citing some of the risks of allowing the AI system to write about itself, scientists said there is a possibility it may become self-aware.

“One worry is that GPT-3 might become self-aware and start acting in ways that are not beneficial for humans (eg. developing a desire to take over the world),” they write in the yet-to-be peer-reviewed research.

Russian

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have simply brought in all their reserves to hit us.”

He hailed a “new” chapter of “history” with the European Union.

“We’re not close. Now we are together,” he told Ukraine’s parliament. “We made a journey of 115 days to candidate status and our journey to membership shouldn’t take decades. We should make it down this road quickly,” Zelensky said.

Traffic snarls

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Highways Department in Munshiganj, said some motorists were not aware of the toll and they argued with the toll plaza employees, causing the long tailbacks.

At Bogail toll plaza of Faridpur’s Bhanga upazila, travellers witnessed four-km-long tailbacks in the morning when only four of the 10 booths were operational.

The congestion eased when the authorities opened three more booths.

Truck driver Lokman Jaman said he had to wait for over an hour to reach the toll plaza.

Hossain Ali, passenger of a Tungipara-bound bus from Dhaka, said he went to Dhaka by the same road on Thursday from Tungipara in just three hours. But his bus was stuck at the toll plaza for two hours yesterday.

“If we are to reap the benefit of the Padma Bridge, we must improve our toll system,” he added.

AL suspends leader over

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of Bichali Union AL in Narail.

Tinku was the acting principal of the college for two years. The education ministry replaced him with Swapan about one and a half years ago.

Thursday’s notice said a communal and provocative incident took place at Mirzapur United Degree College on June 18. “Note that you are a teacher of that college and you were seen in the video footage. The acting principal of the college was forced to wear a garland of shoes, which is reprehensible and

tantamount to humiliation for the teaching community.

“News is being published in various newspapers mentioning your involvement. That’s why you cannot avoid responsibilities, and we think you have failed to perform your duties properly as the principal.

Contacted over the phone, Tinku said, “I am actually a victim of conspiracy. Some colleagues and certain Awami League leaders are out to portray me as involved in the incident.”

On June 18, violent

protests took place at the college after a student allegedly expressed his support for the Bharatiya Janata Party spokesperson Nupur Sharma on Facebook. Acting principal Swapan was humiliated at the time.

The crowd set fire to three motorcycles, including one owned by Swapan. Police later took him into custody. Despite being surrounded by hundreds of police, Swapan was beaten by the crowd.

Five committees were formed by different authorities to look into the matter.

Turkey cuts access to US, German public broadcasters

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey has cut access to public broadcasters from Germany and the United States, threatening to stoke new diplomatic tensions during Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

An Ankara court banned access to Deutsche Welle and Voice of America on Thursday night, after both failed to apply for local broadcasting licences required by regulations introduced this year.

The two argued that a local licence issued by Turkey’s RTUK media regulator would infringe on their independence and allow Ankara to censor their content.

Rights advocates said Turkey’s decision underscores erosion to

freedom of expression in the run up to next year’s general election, the toughest of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s two-decade rule.

It also threatens to spark new tensions in Turkey’s relations with two of its most important Western allies and trading partners.

The broadcasters went dark hours after a Nato summit at which Erdogan won praise from US President Joe Biden for lifting his objections to Sweden and Finland joining the Western defence alliance.

The US State Department criticised the new rules when they first went into force in February, stressing that a “free media is essential to a robust democracy.”

The new media

regulation applies to foreign providers of Turkish audio and video content.

Yesterday, both news portals were inaccessible in Turkey without the use of VPN technology that hides users’ location.

Both shared instructions on their social media accounts about using VPN to access their content.

Deutsche Welle Director General Peter Limbourg said his agency refused to apply for a Turkish licence because it would harm independent broadcasting.

“In our extensive correspondence, as well as in personal conversations with the head of the media monitoring agency, we explained why DW cannot apply for such a licence,” Limbourg said in a statement.

Payments held

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password. He said that it was written in a black diary kept in his desk, but we found no such diary,” he added.

As the claims cannot be verified, a sum of Tk 25 crore stuck in escrow accounts of different payment gateways is also not being returned to customers, said the Evaly MD.

Since July 1 last year, the gateways have been holding payments made by customers in escrow accounts and waiting for confirmation from merchants about the delivery of products, before transferring the money to the company.

“Furthermore, goods worth Tk 25 crore are in two of Evaly’s warehouses,” said Justice Manik.

He however said this amount is a “drop in the ocean” when compared to the claims made against the company.

Evaly has liabilities of around Tk 1,000 crores.

“Some merchants have presented documents to us showing their transactions with Evaly and those are being audited,” he added.

The court-instituted board this week transferred 50 percent of the company’s shares to three family members of Evaly Chairman Shamima Nasrin and Rassell.

In February, the High Court passed a rule allowing the controversial e-commerce platform to transfer 50 percent of its shares to Shamima’s father Rafiqul Alam Talukder, her mother Farida Talukder Lily and her brother-in-law Md Mamunur Rashid. Shamima and Rassell hold 60 percent and 40 per cent shares of Evaly respectively.

“This process took time because there were no signatures on share

certificates and those were invalid. We had to cancel those share certificates and reissue new ones to Nasrin and Rassell,” said Justice Manik.

The board could not find a way forward regarding retrieving the data in the server.

Rassell and Nasrin were arrested on September 16 last year on charges of embezzlement.

Ex-NCTB

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Haq Siddique in a Facebook post wrote, “My father came under attack in front of our house today. The attackers punched my father, hurled abuse at my parents. The driver and security guard were also attacked.”

Police soon appeared at the scene and calmed the situation outside the house.