

CHINESE ‘ESPIONAGE’

Another ‘spy balloon’ over LatAm: US

AFP, Washington

A Chinese spy balloon has been spotted over Latin America, the Pentagon said Friday, a day after a similar craft was seen in US skies, prompting the scrapping of a rare trip to Beijing by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The Pentagon said the first balloon was now heading eastwards over the central United States, adding it was not being shot down for safety reasons.

Later Friday, Pentagon spokesman Pat Ryder said: “We are seeing reports of a balloon transiting Latin America.”

“We now assess it is another Chinese surveillance balloon,” he added, without specifying its exact location.

Moments before Blinken’s decision to cancel his trip – aimed at easing tensions between the two countries – China issued a rare statement of regret over the first balloon and blamed winds for pushing what it called a civilian airship into US airspace.

But President Joe Biden’s administration described it as a maneuverable “surveillance balloon”.

With the rival Republican Party already on the offensive, Blinken postponed a two-day visit that was to have started today.

Blinken said, however, that he told Wang “the United States is committed to diplomatic engagement with China and that I plan to visit Beijing when conditions allow.”

Yesterday, the Chinese foreign ministry released a statement addressing Blinken’s announcement that his trip would not go ahead.

“Some politicians and media in the United States used the (balloon) incident as a pretext to attack and smear China,” it said.

Republican lawmakers, meanwhile, were quick to pounce on the balloon incident, casting Biden – who has largely preserved, and at times expanded, Trump’s hawkish policies on China – as weak.

“Shoot down the balloon!” said Trump on his Truth Social media platform.

A US defense official said earlier that Biden had asked for military options but that the Pentagon believed shooting the object down would put people on the ground at risk from debris.

The United States is also widely believed to spy on China, although generally with more advanced technology than balloons.

The northwestern United States is home to sensitive airbases and nuclear weapons in underground silos.



Anti-government demonstrators shout slogans as they take part in a protest demanding the release of Inter-university Students’ Federation leaders in Colombo, yesterday. Sri Lanka marked 75 years since independence with a sombre military parade yesterday, as its president urged reflection on past “errors and failures” at a time of national crisis.

PHOTO: AFP

ADVANCED WEAPONRY TO UKRAINE

All of Ukraine will burn’

Medvedev again threatens to use nukes if war escalates

REUTERS

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has said the supply of more advanced US weaponry to Ukraine will only trigger more retaliatory strikes from Russia, up to the extent of Russia’s nuclear doctrine.

“All of Ukraine that remains under Kyiv’s rule will burn,” journalist Nadana Fridrikhson quoted him as saying in a written interview with her.

Fridrikhson asked Medvedev, who as deputy chairman of the Security Council has become one of Russia’s most hawkish pro-war figures since its invasion of Ukraine, whether the use of longer-range weapons might force Russia to negotiate with Kyiv.

“The result will be just the opposite,” Medvedev replied, in comments that Fridrikhson posted on her Telegram channel.

“Only moral freaks, of which there are enough both in the White House and in the Capitol, can argue like that.”

The Pentagon said on Friday that a new rocket that would double Ukraine’s strike range was included in a \$2.175 billion US military aid package.

President Vladimir Putin casts Russia’s campaign in Ukraine as an existential defence against an aggressive West and has, like Medvedev, several times brandished the threat of a nuclear response, saying Russia will use all available means to protect itself and its people.

Asked what would happen if the weapons that Washington has promised Ukraine were to strike Crimea – which Russia seized from Ukraine in 2014 – or deep into Russia, Medvedev said Putin had addressed the matter clearly.

“We don’t set ourselves any limits and, depending on the nature of the threats, we’re ready to use all types of weapons. In accordance with our doctrinal documents, including the Fundamentals of Nuclear Deterrence,” he said. “I can assure you that the answer will be quick, tough and convincing.”

Russia’s nuclear doctrine allows for a nuclear strike after “aggression against the Russian Federation with conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is threatened”.

‘BLASPHEMOUS CONTENT’

Pakistan blocks Wikipedia

AFP, Islamabad

Wikipedia was blocked in Pakistan yesterday after authorities censored the website for hosting “blasphemous content” in the latest blow to digital rights in the deeply conservative nation.

Blasphemy is a sensitive issue in Muslim majority Pakistan, and social media giants Facebook and YouTube have previously been banned for publishing content deemed sacrilegious.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority had earlier in the week given Wikipedia a 48 hour ultimatum to remove material, without publically specifying its exact objections.

The Wikimedia Foundation – the non-profit fund managing Wikipedia – said the block “denies the fifth most populous nation in the world access to the largest free knowledge repository”.

“If it continues, it will also deprive everyone access to Pakistan’s knowledge, history, and culture,” a statement said.

Pakistan blocked YouTube from 2012 to 2016 after it carried a film about the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) that led to violent protests across the Muslim world.

India, US discuss

Modi’s White House visit

REUTERS, Washington

The Biden administration is in talks with Indian officials over a possible White House visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi later this year, according to a US official aware of the discussions and another person briefed on the matter.

US President Joe Biden is eager to deepen ties with the world’s largest democracy as part of his bid to win what he has framed as a contest between free and autocratic societies, especially China.

Dates are not finalized, the sources said. Discussions about a possible White House visit intensified this week as Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval met with his US counterpart, Jake Sullivan, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington. During the visit, the United States and India launched a partnership to deepen ties on military equipment, semiconductors and artificial intelligence. Washington has been pushing New Delhi to do more to punish Russia for the Ukraine invasion.



A man performs during a Lunar New Year parade, held for the first time following a three-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic, in the Chinatown area of Yokohama, Japan, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Northeast US,

Canada gird for ‘epic’ Arctic blast

AFP, New York

The northeastern United States and Canada steeled themselves Friday for an “epic” Arctic blast that could see some areas record their lowest ever wind chill temperatures.

America’s National Weather Service (NWS) warned that parts of Maine might see wind chills of minus 60 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 51 degrees Celsius).

“This is an epic, generational arctic outbreak,” the NWS office in Caribou, near Maine’s border with Canada, wrote in an advisory.

It said the chills are “something northern and eastern Maine has not seen since similar outbreaks in 1982 and 1988.”

It warned that frostbite to exposed skin can occur within five minutes in such conditions.

The most extreme conditions are forecast to occur Friday night into Saturday morning, with extreme weather warnings in effect across Quebec and much of eastern Canada. In Montreal, the wind made the temperature feel like minus 41 C early Friday afternoon.

‘HONOUR KILLINGS’

Iraqis outraged after father kills YouTube star daughter

AFP, Baghdad

The death of a young YouTube star at the hands of her father has sparked outrage in Iraq, where so-called “honour killings” continue to take place in the conservative country.

Tiba al-Ali, 22, was killed by her father on January 31 in the southern province of Diwaniya, interior ministry spokesman Saad Maan said on Twitter on Friday.

Police had attempted to mediate between Ali – who resided in Turkey and was visiting Iraq – and her relatives to “resolve the family dispute in a definitive manner”, Maan said.


Unverified recordings of conversations between Ali and her father appeared to indicate that he was unhappy about her decision to live alone in Turkey.

Maan said that after the police’s initial encounter with the family “we were surprised the next day... with the news of her killing at the hands of her father, as he admitted in his initial confessions”.

Ali had gained a following on YouTube, where she posted videos of her daily life and in which her fiance often appeared.

She had travelled to Turkey with her family in 2017, but upon their return, she refused to join them, choosing instead to stay in Turkey where she resided since, the police source said.

Human rights defender Hanaa Edwar told AFP that, according to voice recordings attributed to the young woman, “she left her family... because she was sexually assaulted by her brother”.



Pabna University of Science and Technology

Office of the University Engineer

Memo No :PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/OTM/2022-23


Date: 31/01/2023

e-Tender Notice (FY/2022-2023)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works ofunder “Pabna University of Science & Technology”, PUST, Pabna.

Sl No	Tender ID	APP ID	Package No & Invitation Ref. No	Name of Works	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Method
1	784977	190335	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/Civil/22-23/05	Supplying of best quality Torch light, Raincoat and umbrella for security office at PUST, FY 2022-23	31-Jan-2023 14:30	16-Feb-2023 12:30	OTM
2	784968	190335	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/Civil/22-23/10	Thai Aluminium, Painting, Repairing & Other Ancillary Works at Honorable VC, Pro-VC and Registrar Office at PUST FY-2022-2023	31-Jan-2023 14:30	16-Feb-2023 12:30	OTM
3	784962	190335	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/Civil/22-23/09	Water Supply Line Reconstruction, Renovation of Bathroom, Construction of Flag Stand, Thai Aluminium and Other Ancillary Works at Honorable Voice-Chancellor Bangle at PUST FY 2022-2023	31-Jan-2023 14:00	16-Feb-2023 12:15	OTM
4	784129	190335	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/Civil/22-23/07	Renovation Works of Wash Block Arrangement and Dedicated Washroom for Female at Cafeteria, Central Library and Dr. M. A. Wazed Miah Science Building at PUST. FY-2022-2023	31-Jan-2023 14:30	16-Feb-2023 12:30	OTM
5	782507	190335	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/Civil/22-23/11	Supplying, fitting and fixing of Different Sanitary fittings for Departments, Offices, Residential and Non-Residential Buildings at Pabna University Of Science & Technology, PUST- FY-2022-2023	31-Jan-2023 14:00	16-Feb-2023 12:00	OTM
6	783983	190335	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/Civil/22-23/03	Repairing, maintenance and emulsion paint works of Independence Square at PUST. FY 2022-2023	31-Jan-2023 12:00	16-Feb-2023 12:00	OTM

This is an online Tender where only e-tender will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



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