

Resume talks

China urges Russia, Ukraine, warns against using nuclear weapons

AGENCIES

China yesterday called for urgent peace talks as it released its plan to end the war in Ukraine, but Western powers quickly rebuffed the proposals while warning against Beijing's closing ties to Moscow.

The 12-point paper calling for a "political settlement" of the crisis follows accusations from the West that China is considering arming Russia, a claim Beijing has dismissed as false.

Timed to coincide with the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the paper calls for all parties to "support Russia and Ukraine in working in the same direction and resuming direct dialogue as quickly as possible," reports AFP.

It also makes clear its opposition to not only the use of nuclear weapons, but the threat of deploying them, after Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened to use Moscow's atomic arsenal in the conflict.

But the document was immediately met by scepticism from Ukraine's allies, with Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg saying Beijing "doesn't have much credibility because they have not been able to condemn the illegal invasion of Ukraine".

US President Joe Biden's national security advisor said the war "could end tomorrow if Russia stopped attacking Ukraine and withdrew its forces".

"My first reaction to (the position paper) is that it could stop at point one, which is to respect the sovereignty of all nations," Jake Sullivan told CNN.

And German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said that while "every constructive suggestion that brings us closer on the path to a just peace is highly welcome... whether global power China wants to play such a constructive role is still doubtful".

Meanwhile, Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg yesterday reacted reservedly to a Chinese proposal for a ceasefire in Ukraine, saying Beijing did not have a lot of credibility as a mediator, according to Reuters.



People take part in a candlelight vigil outside UN University to mark the one year anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in Tokyo, Japan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

G20 tussles over Ukraine war

REUTERS, Bengaluru

Finance leaders of the world's top economies yesterday sought to bridge differences over how to deal with Russia following its year-old invasion of Ukraine as the West stepped up sanctions against Moscow.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen accused Russian officials at the two-day Group of Twenty (G20) meeting in the Indian city of Bengaluru of being "complicit" in war atrocities.

But, underlining the split with those nations which have not

joined efforts to isolate the Russian economy, meeting host India avoided mention of the year-long war in inaugural remarks and said the global economy faced a range of other challenges.

"I would urge that your discussions should focus on the most vulnerable citizens of the world," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, adding that stability, confidence and growth had to be brought back to the world economy.

Modi cited the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, rising debt levels, disruptions to supply chains and

threats to food and energy security as key concerns for the talks.

India does not want the bloc to discuss sanctions on Russia and is also pressing to avoid using the word "war" in any G20 communique to describe the conflict, G20 officials told Reuters.

But French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said there was no way the grouping could step back from a joint statement agreed at a G20 summit in Bali, Indonesia last November, which noted that "most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine".

US-S KOREA NUKE DRILL North Korea fires more missiles

AFP, Seoul



North Korea said yesterday it had fired cruise missiles and claimed that ramped-up US South Korean military drills "can be regarded as a declaration of war". It came after the two allies conducted a tabletop

exercise at the Pentagon focused on responses to a nuclear attack by Pyongyang. North Korean forces held a "strategic cruise missile launching drill" in the early hours of Thursday, firing four Hwasal-2s, the official Korean Central News Agency reported yesterday. The exercise demonstrated North Korea's "deadly nuclear counterattack capability against the hostile forces", it said. The defence ministry in Seoul questioned that description of the test, saying there was a difference between what was announced and what US and South Korean surveillance detected.

Bird flu situation in Cambodia 'worrying'

REUTERS, London

The World Health Organization is working with the Cambodian authorities after two confirmed human cases of H5N1 bird flu were found in the country among one family. Describing the situation as "worrying" due to the recent rise in cases in birds and mammals, Dr Sylvie Briand, the director of epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention, told reporters that WHO was reviewing its global risk assessment in light of the recent developments. On Thursday, Cambodian authorities reported the death of an 11-year-old girl due to H5N1, and began testing 12 of her contacts. Her father also tested positive for the virus.

Masked men pick up two

FROM PAGE 12
At that time, Jamal was a post-graduate student in Dhaka and Mehedi was a Fazil student in Lalmonirhat.

Of the five, one secured bail in 2018, while Mehedi, Jamal, and two others remained in jail since November 2017, according to sources in Lalmonirhat court.

Last week, a Lalmonirhat court acquitted Mehedi and Jamal in the case and sentenced the other two accused to 42 years in prison each.

On February 21, Mehedi and Jamal were released from Lalmonirhat jail.

Mehedi father's Abdul Latif said, "We were waiting for Mehedi at the gate of

the Lalmonirhat District Jail. As Mehedi and Jamal crossed the jail gate, a black microbus suddenly stopped in front of them.

"Some 8 to 10 masked men got down and grabbed Mehedi and Jamal and shoved them inside the vehicle. The microbus then fled the scene."

"We started shouting. But the microbus fled before we could realise anything," said Jamal's brother Abul Kalam Azad, while giving a similar description of the incident.

"We have no idea who abducted them (Mehedi and Jamal). We just want them back as soon as possible," he added.

Contacted, Shafiqul Alam, jailer of Lalmonirhat

District Jail, said it was not their jurisdiction to see what happens once the inmates were released from jail.

He, however, said that he heard some unknown people abducted Mehedi and Jamal from a place which was some 100 metres from the jail gate.

Family members of both men filed missing person complaints with the local police station on Thursday and held a press conference at Lalmonirhat Press Club on the same day, demanding the whereabouts of the abductees.

Contacted, Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Ershadul Alam said police were working to find the two men who went missing.

139 appeals over death penalty

FROM PAGE 12
comprising at least four judges of the Appellate Division. The special High Court bench, which heard and disposed of the case and delivered the verdict, was formed with three judges."

"Now, three separate benches of the Appellate Division, which has only eight judges including Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, are hearing and disposing of cases of this court. Backlogs of cases at the Appellate Division are going down as three benches are now functioning," he said.

The attorney general said, "I hope the backlogs at the Appellate Division will come to a tolerable level in a few months and then the chief justice will constitute a special bench for hearing and disposing of the appeals in the BDR mutiny case."

"I cannot specifically say how much time it will take to complete the hearing of

the appeals," the attorney general added.

A trial court could not even finish recording statements of witnesses in another case filed in connection with the same incident under the Explosive Substances Act-1908.

Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol told this correspondent that the trial court concerned is now recording statements of witnesses of that case. "I hope the trial of the case will be completed within this year."

Meanwhile, Aminul Islam, one of the defence lawyers of BDR carnage case, told this paper that it depends on the chief justice when the Appellate Division will start hearing the appeals.

He added that the trial court has so far recorded statements of 280 out of 1,264 witnesses in the Explosive Substances Act.

A total of 49 appeals have been filed on behalf of

the convicted.

Of them, 26 appeals were filed by 53 condemned convicts. The rest were filed on behalf of 151 convicts who were sentenced to life imprisonment in the BDR killing case, he said, adding that the state also filed 20 appeals against the acquittals of 83 by the HC.

The defence lawyer said around 500 accused, who have already served jail sentences and got acquitted by the trial court and HC, could not walk out of jail as they are also accused in the Explosive Substances Act case.

"The court may not need to record statements of most of the witnesses," he added.

Over a year will be needed to finish the trial of the case filed under the Explosive Substances Act, he said, adding that family members of the arrested have been suffering and leading a very miserable life.

Advertisement for '5th Film Script Writing Course' by Bangladesh Film and Television Institute. Includes details about the course, fees, and contact information.

Address out-of-pocket

FROM PAGE 12
suggest that financial barriers are already a challenge that needs to be addressed to ensure equitable access to primary healthcare services.

"When families face high levels of OOPS, including primary healthcare user fees, they can forego critically important care or resort to borrowing money or selling assets, which can threaten their livelihoods."

The eighth five-year plan names Bangladesh's existing health financing levels as insufficient and specifies that rising OOPS threatens to undermine national poverty reduction efforts, the report said.

Subsequently, the WB called for exploring health financing reforms that increase public financing for the health sector to reduce OOPS.

At present, the ministry of health and family welfare allocates resources based on historic line-item budgets, a practice known as "passive purchasing."

However, this mechanism leaves little discretion or incentive for managers throughout the health system to adapt to local challenges or implement changes that could result in greater

efficiency.

"The government of Bangladesh would benefit from exploring new pooling and purchasing mechanisms that contribute to risk pooling, prepayment of health services and resource allocation based on the health needs of the population."

Such mechanisms could take the form of demand-side financing schemes such as health insurance, capitation payment for primary care resource allocation, and performance-based incentives, among others.

In Indonesia, for example, primary care facilities that are part of a new national health insurance system, Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional, are paid according to a capitation formula that incorporates the enrolled population as well as characteristics of the facilities, providers, and patient disease burden.

Further, capitation payments are linked to indicators of the contact rate, referral rates, and chronic disease management measures, such that there is a performance-based component of the payment.

No rule of law

FROM PAGE 12
The people want freedom from discrimination and misrule," said the JP chairman.

GM Quader said the country's liberation struggle turned into the great Independence War in 1971, through which the country became independent.

"Millions of people gave their lives in the war. But are

the people of the country free from discrimination, torture, and oppression? The people did not get their desired freedom."

Quader said there was no room for compromise in politics in the interests of the people.

"We are not working in favour of any party. We are working in the interest of the people of the country," he added.

BCL men beat

FROM PAGE 12
Around 3:00pm on Thursday, Altaf Hossain was going to a local bank with the school's Computer Operator Shuvro Dutta on a motorbike. Tanjif and his six to seven associates intercepted the bike in Mohanpur area. They punched the head teacher and beat him up with sticks. Shuvro was also assaulted for trying to save the head teacher.

The attackers snatched Tk 5,500, a watch, and a mobile phone from Altaf Hossain and left, added the case statement.

Later, some locals took the two to the upazila health complex. They received primary treatment there.

This newspaper could not reach Tanjif for comments as his mobile phone was found switched off.

Contacted, district BCL President MA Sifat Quraishi Suman said that if anyone from Chhatra League is found involved in attacking the teacher, the person would be expelled from the organisation.

Harirampur Police Station OC Suman Kumar Aditya said they have already arrested an accused named Nayan. Efforts were underway to pick up the rest of the accused, he added.

"Sixth sense field remains unknown," said study co-author Richard Baines from the University of Manchester.

"This study has made significant advances in understanding how animals sense and respond to external magnetic fields - a very active and disputed field," Dr Baines said.

Advertisement for 'Our golden promises' by Sawansukha. Features a woman in traditional jewelry and text about gold rates and exchange values.